Classic CONSOLE MAGAZINE

STREETS OF RAGE

Beat 'Em Up Games!

FINAL FIGHT

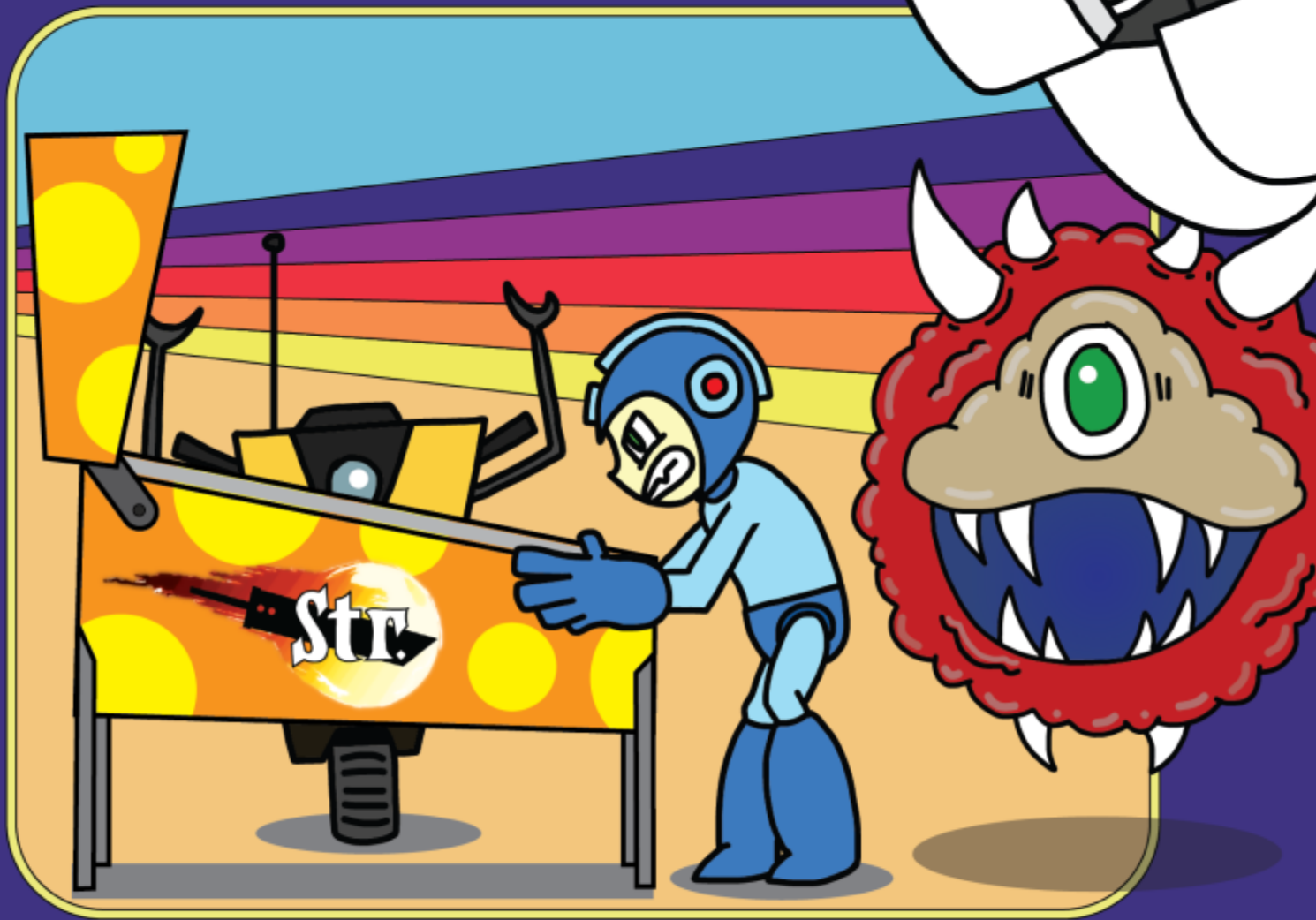## GAMER MEMORIES

ARCHIE'S SONIC THE HEDGEHOG COMICS

CONTRA TIPS AND TRICKS

RETRO INSPIRED MOBILE GAMING

Classic Console Readers, Please check out these Awesome Sponsors and thank them for their support which makes our FREE issues possible. Without their support we wouldn't exist!

from the Editor...

Dear Subscribers,

We want to thank you for your continued support of our little magazine! We are so excited to deliver you quality, original, retro-gaming content with each and every issue. Our whole staff is comprised of volunteers who dedicate their very valuable time, effort and in some cases money to see this publication come out each and every month.

I want to personally thank each and every one of you for your support and your patience as this issue got delayed by several weeks. One of the things that makes us great is that we are not published or backed by one of the large video game journalism websites. We are not made by a large corporation. We are completely independent, by gamers for gamers.

The downside of that is that it is our first attempt at publishing. We are learning and growing (growing at a pretty quick rate, thanks to all our new subscribers for signing up!) as we go along. At the same time we were working on this new issue, we were also trying to put the pieces in place so that in the next few months we can launch a Kickstarter campaign, offer print copies and many more exciting things. As all of us work full time jobs and do this in our spare time, it became very apparent that we would have to endure a few delays here and there right now, so that once many more of you subscribe to a paid (or free) version, you will be able to expect your new issue out at the same time every month.

We are working on building a solid foundation for our future and we can't wait to take this amazing journey with all of you, our loyal readers!

Josh LaFrance
Editor in Chief

Reader Mail

One question we pose to all of our subscribers on the website is the following question: "Is there anything you want to see in a future issue of the magazine?" Below is a collection of responses we have received from YOU, our subscribers!

The maze in level 8-4...so that after 20 years of playing I can rescue Peach...

-Meghan G.

The Magic of Scheherazade. It's a game that NEEDS MORE LOVE than it got back in the day!

-Al B.

Vectrex, 2600, Intellivision, handhelds..... anything pre-NES!

-Brian M.

The Magic of Scheherazade. It's a game that NEEDS MORE LOVE than it got back in the day!

-Todd P.

Gaming checklists, top game lists, lots of Sony content, equipment and tools used for collecting and where to get them (like display cases to security bits)

-Mitch H.

Maybe some of the more obscure games? Forgotten gems kind of thing?

-Jim B.

Something on handheld/tabletop electronic games, like the story behind Hales or Granstand.

-Clive S.

An article on the Swordquest series (Atari 2600) and if there will ever be a conclusion with Airworld.

-Mark B.

I would love to read about games that were only distributed in certain countries. Example: Japan. I went to Tokyo and saw loads of games I'd never heard of.

Also it would be nice to get maybe plots synopsis of games in more depth. Maybe like a monthly game story or something like that. Sometimes I find myself questioning things that happened in a game or maybe I would have understood more about the game if I'd have known more history about the story or plot. Example, like Mario 3 was set as a stage performance. I never thought of something like that as a kid until I read about it now. So stuff like that.

-Isidro M.

As long as each retro console gets it's 'moment in the sun" I believe this publication will rock. But, hey, a tribute to lesser known gems would be awesome, too! Remember Startropics? Metal Storm? Awesome games!

-Chris R.

What's in this Issue...

Archie COMICS

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG BOOKS
By Josh LaFrance

When many think of Archie Comics, they think of the teen-oriented comic series starring lovable High School aged stars: Archie, Veronica, Betty and Jughead. However, Archie Comics' history starts long before its namesake publication.

The life of the company now known as Archie Comics began in 1939 when 3 businessmen, Maurice Coyne, Louis Silberkleit and John Goldwater formed what was then known as MLJ Magazines. MLJ focused on superhero comic books initially, as during the late 30's and into the mid 40's the Golden Age of Comics (as it is now called by comic aficionados) was all about action and adventure titles. Sales were good and soon MLJ was known as Archie Comic Publications. Archie Comics is now considered one of the largest publishers of comic book titles (after of course the big two, Marvel and DC).

So where does the story of the books featuring our favorite hedgehog begin? The answer is 1992.

Between late 1992 and early 1993, Archie released a four issue mini-series spotlighting the famous blue fur covered speed demon. They wanted to appeal to a demographic they felt were not reading comics and hence the Sonic title was born. When it was announced that Sonic was being released in a comic book it was big news for gamers. This was all thanks to a licensing agreement reached earlier by Archie with SEGA.

Response to the four issue miniseries was so strong that in May of 1993 the full fledged Sonic the Hedgehog comic series began. This title is still released to this day and set a Guinness World Record in 2008 as the longest running comic series based on a video game title! (take that Mario..)

Not only does Archie still release the Sonic the Hedgehog title monthly, but they also have published the Sonic Universe series, Knuckles the Enchidna and a comic called Sonic X.

We will take a quick moment to spotlight each one of these titles and talk about their influence, memorable

story arcs and whether or not you can still find them today (they are not all still published).

Sonic the Hedgehog

The original Sonic comic stories follows a very similar continuity to that of the Sonic animated series. (perhaps a future installment of Gamer Memories?) In the universe of the animated series and the comic books, it differs slightly from the video games.

Sonic and his pals are members of a group of rebels known as the 'Freedom Fighters". They exist to help the inhabitants of their planet fight against the evil Dr. Robotnik.

Many themes from the video games are also woven into the continuity and there are direct references in some issues to events which take place in the video game series.

The early issues of Sonic the Hedgehog (up through #39 specifically) are much more lighthearted and many stories are one-off with the following issue being a brand new story rather than a continuation of a previous story arc. If you enjoyed Saturday morning cartoons when you were younger and like slapstack comedy mixed with some action, these earlier releases are for you. The good news is that many of these earlier issues can be purchased in a graphic novel form with 4 issues being printed per book.

Later story arcs were brought on that would be told over the span of multiple issues and the tone in general became more epic with less of a cartoon style.

One story arc that made gamers all over the globe sit up and take notice was the introduction of Mega Man in 'Worlds Collide".

Dr. Robotnik teams up with Dr. Wily to enact a universal domination scheme like never before seen. Sonic and Mega Man must work together to prevent that from taking place. This is a great series of stories and without giving away any spoilers, you just need to read it if you enjoy either one of these characters! This can also be found in graphic novel form, visit Archie's online store to buy yourself a copy with all of the stories contained within a book format.

Sonic Universe

Taking place in the same universe as the Sonic the Hedgehog comic title (hence the name), Sonic Universe takes the themes from the original series and expands upon them. If you want to read more about Shadow the Hedgehog, Blaze the Cat or countless others, this is the place to do that.

Released first in 2009, Sonic Universe is also released monthly just like the main Sonic title. The neat thing about Sonic Universe is that the story arc changes every 4 issues. These stories take place concurrently at the

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same time as the main title, however Sonic is more of a supporting character here, instead of the main focus of the book.

A favorite story arc of many fans was 'Mobius: 30 Years Later" which shows a new team of Freedom Fighters made up of the children of Sonic and company. Sonic Universe builds upon the rich storylines and worlds explored in the Sonic comics and really is a must read for all of those who consider themselves a fan of the Sonic franchise. Many people subscribe to both monthly Sonic releases (Sonic the Hedgehog and Sonic Universe) to get the full experience.

Knuckles the Enchidna

Released between 1997 and 2000, Knuckles the Enchidna was the first spin off title from Sonic the Hedgehog. Knuckles proved to be a very interesting character to dive deeper into. Just like in the games, Knuckles is initially tricked by Dr. Eggman into being pitted against Sonic. Once he learned the truth and turned to good, Knuckles started upon a journey of self-exploration, learning more about himself and where he came from.

Sonic X

Sonic X was originally created as an Anime series by TMS Entertainment. Riding the wave of popular adoption of Japanese anime by American audiences, Sonic X first was released on TV in the US and Europe in 2005.

Not long after, Archie released a comic book version in 2005 as well. It ran until 2008 and consisted of 40 issues thorughout the entire volume.

The Sonic X comic storyline varies greatly from the Japanese anime, games and other comics relased by Archie. In the Sonic X comic universe, Eggman imprisons humans inside of robots and attempts to use them in an evil scheme to kill all of the animals on the planet. The animals (Sonic included) fight back and destroy the robots. The story does not end there however. Sonic X offers a completely alternate story from what Sonic fans are used to. At one point, Sonic gets framed and ends up locked in jail with Dr. Eggman.

Reading Made Fun

There have been many attempts at creating video game based comic books, going back as far as the Atari Force books bundled with games in 1982. None have had the long lasting appeal and staying power as Archie's Sonic the Hedgehog books. No matter what your reading tastes are in comics, the Sonic books offer a little something for everyone, from kiddie slapstick to epic action and adventure.

VIDEO GAME COMIC BOOKS

The Legend of Zelda, Valiant, 1990

The Legend of Zelda Comic series was a very short lived but beloved series of books released by Valiant Comics in 1990. The Legend of Zelda was part of the bigger Nintendo Comics System line released by Valiant in 1990 through 1991.

Selling for the cover price of $1.95, only six issues of this book were ever released. Each issue contained two main stories which each ran a total of 10 pages as well as a few shorts. The shorts were always more comical and lighter in tone.

Issue 1 begins with Link finding the Triforce of Courage and the action ramps up very quickly. Valiant took a mixture of new characters (such as Captain Krin among others) as well as familiar characters (Princess Zelda, Ganon and Impa to name a few) to create intersting story arcs and adventures.

Atari Force, DC, 1982 & 1984-1986

Beginning as pack in books with five games: Defender, Berzerk, Star Raiders, Phoenix and Galaxian, DC's Atari Force initially followed the adventures of a multi-national team of space explorers. The team was picked and trained by an orgainzation known as A.T.A.R.I (Advanced Technology and Research Institute).

With Earth facing a great ecological disaster due to pollution, Atari Force must find a new suitable planet for humankind to survive.

The second incarnation of Atari Force was set in the same universe 25 years later with a new team of adventurers. DC released this volume as a standalone comic consisting of 20 issues as well as an Atari Force special in 1986.

The first 5 comics from 1982 are selling for well over $100 on multiple places online for those who want to collect them.
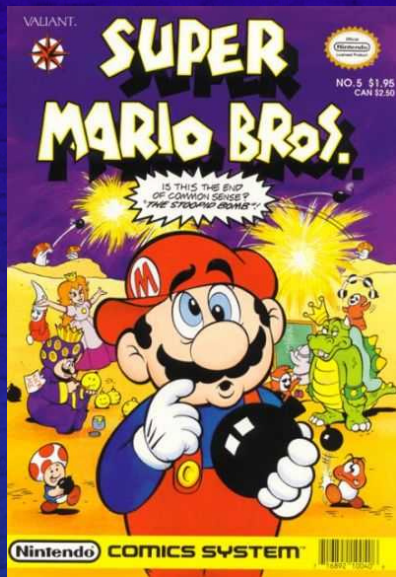
Super Mario Bros., Valiant, 1990

The second title from Valiant Comics on our list, Super Mario Bros. was yet another short lived but fun little book. Also a release in the aforementioned Nintendo Comics System, Super Mario Bros. lasted 6 issues.

If you have watched or are a fan of the Super Mario Bros. animated series produced by DIC entertainment, then you are right at home here. The books are filled full of fun, slapstick comedy action and some adventure too.

Most of the stories in the book are set in the world from the Super Mario Bros. 3 game.

Sonic the Hedgehog, Archie, 1993 - Present

Archie's Sonic the Hedgehog is beloved as the longest running video game related comic book of all time.

The title has seen a great transformation over time from it's humble beginnings as a four issue mini-series concentrating primarily on very kid-oriented slapstick comedy storylines to the present incarnation starting in issue #252 (the current continuity) which offers comic book readers a mature and action packed take on our beloved blue hedgehog.

Classic Console Tip: The early issues can be purchaed in anthology paperback format directly from Archie's website.

Mortal Kombat, Malibu, 1994-1995

Apparently Malibu had a thing for making comics based on fighting games, as they also had the rights to; and subsequently published a Street Fighter series in 1993. Street Fighter was an absolute failure and Capcom put an end to it being made after just 3 issues.

It looks like Malibu learned from their mistakes as Mortal Kombat is a much better series and lasted for 27 issues.

Each issue is packed full of fast and furious action and adventure. Our only gripe was that they really deviated from the original story of a tournament of fighters and it was not very faithful to the video games. However, all of the favorite characters are represented here.

10 FUN FACTS ABOUT

1. SEGA is frequently thought of as a Japanese company, but they actually had their beginnings as a company based in Hawaii called Service Games in 1940.

2. Service Games originally manufactured slot machines.

3. In 1951, the founders moved the company to Tokyo, Japan.

4. SEGA is an acronym for Service Games.

5. SEGA's arcade game Periscope was the first game in America to cost 25 cents to play.

6. SEGA introduced the first 3D game, SubRoc 3D.

7. In the mid 80's SEGA pioneered the full body arcade experience with Hang-On and Afterburner.

8. Alex Kidd was SEGA's first mascot. Sonic took over those duties starting in 1991.

9. Sonic the Hedgehog 2 has sold over 6 million copies since it's release in 1992.

10. Sadly after the ultimate failure of the Dreamcast, SEGA decided to become a third-party software company.

Demon's Crest

By Brandon Poe

Each month in Retro Revisited, Classic Console's very own Brandon Poe picks one classic game to play. This month's classic: Capcom's Demon's Crest.

As I pondered about what retro game to play next, I remembered Super Ghosts and Ghouls for the SNES. I recalled how hard it was and tossed around the idea of putting my skills to the test and giving it a run. So, I went searching for this little gem and in the process I stumbled across a different game I had forgotten all about, a diamond in the rough.

The diamond I am referring to is Demon's Crest. I know many people may not remember this game (honestly I barely remember it) and I knew that I did not play it when I was younger, which made me want to play it even more. I could not wait to play this game simply because who doesn't want to play as a gargoyle?

Before I get into the details and my impressions of the game let us look at the history of Demon's Crest.

Demon's Crest was developed and published by Capcom (they seemed to rule over the gaming industry back then). The interesting thing about this game is that it stars the bad guy from Ghosts and Goblins, Firebrand. Demon's Crest was released in November 1994 making it a little over 20 years old.

It is part of a series named Gargoyle's Quest (which I have never heard of until I started doing some research on the game). Demon's Crest takes a page from Ghosts and Goblins series as a run and gun platformer which was very popular in those days (in a gaming time long long ago).

When thinking back about this game I do not know why it was not more popular, considering it was spiritually a spin off from the Ghosts and Goblins series.

If I had to guess I would say it was due to marketing, even still I found out that the game received some very impressive ratings, with Nintendo Life giving it a 9/10.

Demon's Crest in my opinion was not underrated, I think the more proper word to use would be under-appreciated.

Jumping into the story, Demon's Crest stars the villain Firebrand which in this case may be considered an anti-hero. At the beginning of the game he is in possession of five crests of power. There are six crests total, each of them are associated with an element. (i.e. Fire, Earth, Water, Air, Time, and Heaven.)

Firebrand attempts to acquire the last crest he needs (Heaven) from a Demon Dragon (pretty

gnarly looking fellow if I say so myself) and as it turns out, Firebrand defeats him and takes the last crest.

Apparently there is no honor amongst demons and as Firebrand is leaving to lick his wounds he gets attacked by another demon and has all his crests taken away.

I jumped right into this game with very high expectations. I was entertained by the opening scene of Firebrand owning, then getting owned and a demon doing his monologue thing about how the world will be his and blah blah. I skipped the rest of the monologue and jumped into the game and started to play, when immediately I am thrown into a boss fight with a zombie dragon. We are off to a wonderful start!

I thrash this guy and make my way out into the world of demons with revenge on my mind and heart.

The game is pretty linear as I shoot monster A and collect the in-game currency I am sure will be used for something later on down the line. I continued as I punished each stage boss with the audacity to oppose me. I found myself really enjoying this game and the more I played the madder I got at myself for taking so many years to pick it up.

As I continued through the game I did however notice something that I guess I ignored in the beginning. I realized the music in the game was pretty boring, considering how fantastic the controls felt and how fluid the gameplay is, it surprised me that the music was so bad, considering the graphics were great.

I continued through the levels and I was impressed with the difficulty of the game. It is not brutal to the point of throwing your controller across the room, but it is definitely a challenge and you feel accomplished when completing a level and taking down a boss.

As I proceeded through the game, (I will not bore you with a play by play of each stage) I collected the crests that I lost in the opening scene and really began to feel more powerful. Things were looking good, I was on the right path to conquering this demon world and getting the revenge I sought on the cretin that could not fight me face to face like a man.

I should also mention the equip system, while not a very impressive interface, I think it was just something thrown in to give your character a sense of variety, even though in my opinion every choice was pretty mandatory to proceed through the game.

It took me about an hour and thirty minutes to play through the entire game with no deaths and I have to say that my overall opinion of the game is that it deserves the ratings it received.

I would definitely give this game a 9 out of 10 for how well put together the game is and the great story line.

I enjoyed taking on the role as the infamous Firebrand as he grew in power to take on and take over the demon world, growing more and more powerful after each stage.

The game is wonderful and I enjoyed every minute of it, as I mentioned my only gripe is the mediocre soundtrack, but once you get past the boring music, you will enjoy the game a great deal. I mean who doesn't want a chance to play as the bad guy?

Check out Brandon's Twitch channel at: www.twitch.tv/musculyrmpaperboy for more gaming goodness!

HAKUNA MATATA

A Bit by Bit Guide to Must Play Disney Games

By Matt Dawson

Whether it's early mornings with Mickey or feature length blockbusters at the movies, Disney has been a part of nearly everyone's life. Not only has Walt and his team basically built the animation genre, but with the help of some of the industries biggest studios, released some of the greatest games ever made for consoles.

It doesn't matter if you are 6 or 60, whether you're from Neverland or the Enchanted Forest, or even if you are a talking dog, mouse or rabbit, these games will appeal to you all.

So sit down, get comfortable and get a pen and paper ready, because here's a bit by bit list of must play Disney video games, and of course we had to start off with one of the most loved games of all time. Oo-da-lally!

Duck Tails (Capcom)
Nintendo Entertainment System - 1989

Developed by the mighty Capcom and released before Christmas of 1989 in North America, this game has a soft spot in a lot of people's gaming hearts.

Duck Tails sets the standards that all games that follow would need to achieve, and the bar has been set sky high. Easily distinguishable characters, great if not amazing music and amazing playability with great replay value, adds up to a game that MUST be played, no matter what generation of consoles you grew up with!

This game is so good, not only is it one of the biggest selling Disney games ever, it is Capcoms best selling game on the NES and Game Boy.
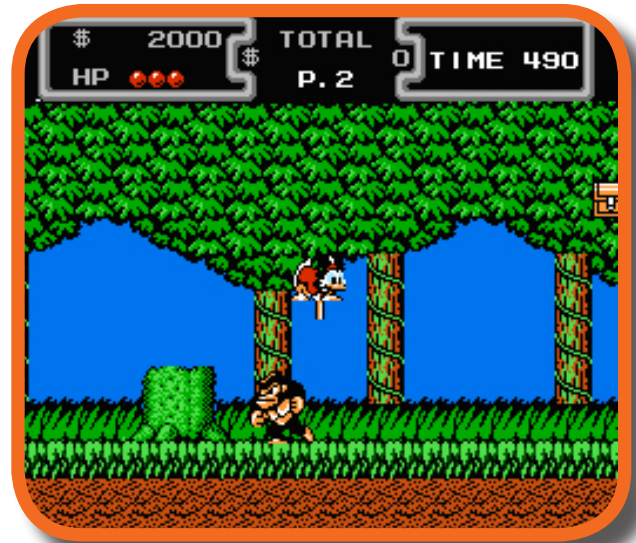
Castle of Illusion starring Mickey Mouse (Sega)
Sega Master System - 1990

The first entry for the lead Mouse himself, and I have chosen the Master System classic, Castle of Illusion. Mickey must be at his very best to save Minnie from Mizrabel, and with fantastic controls, great mechanics and foot tapping music this Sega exclusive sure as hell was a publisher hitting top form.

This Sega classic is available on the Master System, Game Gear and the Genesis / Mega Drive.

Now in my eyes that's 3 chances of owning a classic that will give you entertainment for hours!
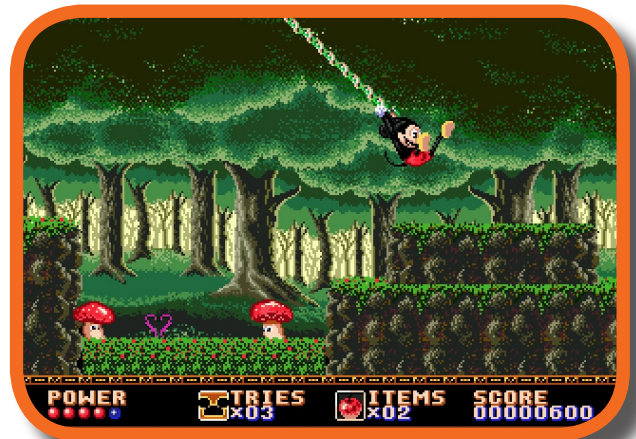
Aladdin (Virgin Games)
Mega Drive - 1993

Aladdin is a game so good that Sega started to sell the Genesis and the game as a package. (Surely that says something about how damn good it is!)

More hardcore that it's SNES twin (Sega allowed you to have a kick ass sword), this game is a side scrolling beast!

I haven't met anyone who has picked up this game and said they don't like it, and once you have played it you can see why.

Smooth, fast, amazing graphics (maybe it's that blast processor) and great recognizable Disney music, Aladdin is a superb addition to any gamer's collection.
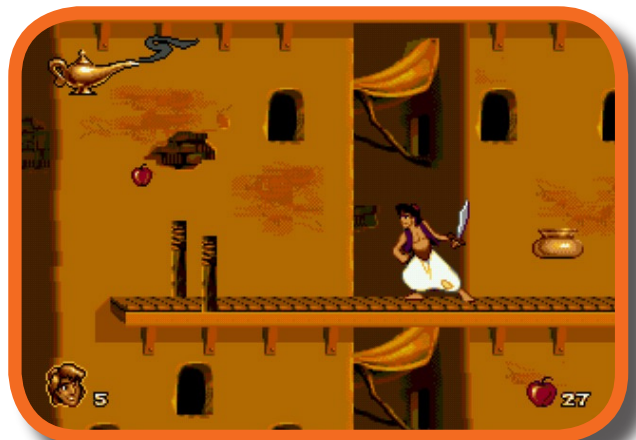
The Lion King (Westwood Studios)
Super Nintendo Entertainment System - 1994

The lion king does hold a certain place in my heart. Not only is it released across multiple platforms (8 in total) but it was the final ever N.E.S. release in Europe. (RIP)

One of the best Disney films (ever?) turned into a video game instantly puts us on to a winner. All of the award winning music to sing along to, beautiful backgrounds, amazing animation and wonderful platforming is the key to this games charm.

Another video game that Disney knocked clean out of the park!

Mickey's Wild Adventure (Traveller's Tales)
PlayStation - 1996

Now this is the game that I have the fondest memories of. Growing up taking control of my favourite legendary Mouse travelling through his biggest cartoons across multiple years is seriously great fun. Easy to play, loads of great levels, catchy music and loads of familiar faces; This game is such a joy to play.

From the early black and white days all the way to the bright and colourful 90's, this (in my opinion) is one of the very best Disney games on home consoles.

Platforming at its very best! You can't help singing in your head M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E.
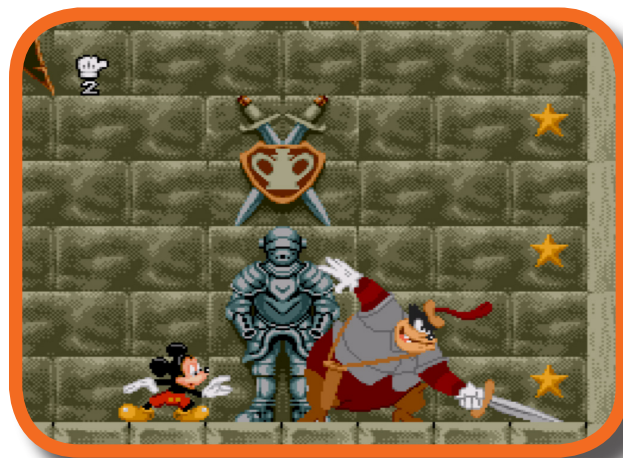
I could have listed loads of other games. Here are a few honourable mentions:

Chip N Dale Rescue Rangers - NES

Darkwing Duck - TurboGrafx 16

TaleSpin - Game Boy

5 games, 5 developers and multiple platforms, but one thing that they all have in common is that feeling that only Disney's amazing characters and stories can give you.

CONTRA

#1 SPRAY AND PRAY-

Don't bother aiming. At points in the game you have so many enemies and objects flying toward you, you are better off to concentrate on avoiding danger while spraying a steady stream of bullets to take care of the threat.

This brings us to tip #2, which is all about the weapon options at your disposal..

#2 ARSENAL OF DESTRUCTION-

A variety of destructive weapons exist in the game. From the simple 'pea shooter" rifle to the flame gun, everyone has their favorite and depending on the situation some may serve you better than others.

The best weapons to hunt for are the spread shot, the laser ray and the flame shot. Stick to the spread shot if you need to destroy many enemies on the screen at a time. The laser ray is the most powerful weapon in the game but is hampered by a slow rate of fire.

#3 EXTRA HELP-

As much of an amazing classic as Contra is, it is not a very forgiving game. Sometimes you might need just that extra bit of help to get through the game.

Want to start with 30 lives? At the title screen enter the Konami code. Almost every fan of retro gaming knows the Konami code, but just in case, here it is below:

⬆️ ⬆️ ⬇️ ⬇️ ⬅️ ➡️ ⬅️ ➡️ B A

#4 AVOID TROUBLE-

The name of the game is to avoid danger and destroy enemies. That is why it is best to just spray (see tip #1) and concentrate on avoiding trouble.

Many types of enemies are restricted in the number of directions they can shoot in. In the case of Gunners and Cannons, ducking will allow you to avoid fire as it passes above your head. Scuba soldiers are very hard to kill, however their shot is directly upwards, so just take care in avoiding them and you should be all set. Snipers can fire in every direction and are more difficult.
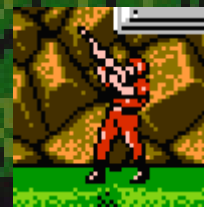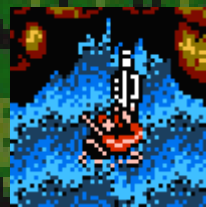
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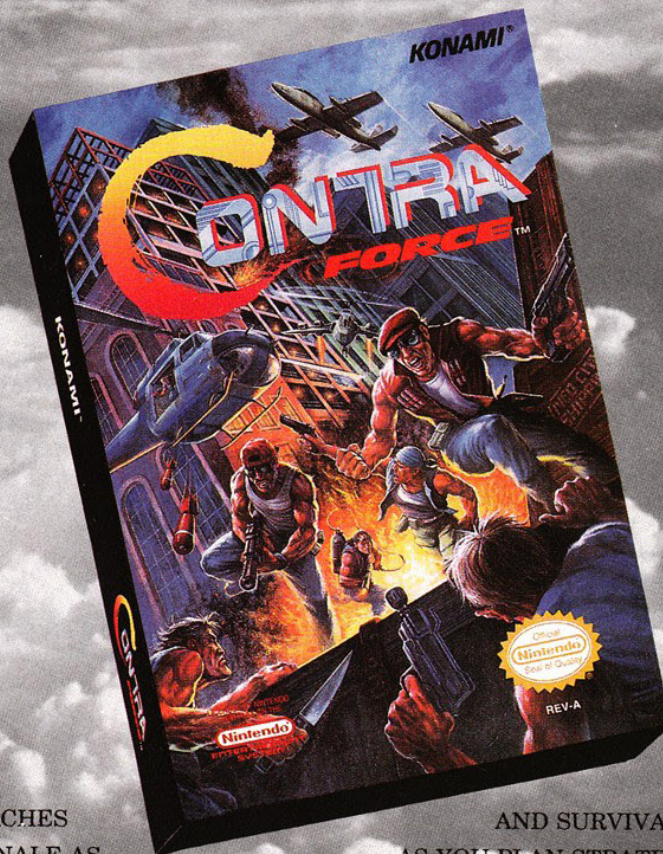
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Pixels and Peach Baskets Pt. 2
An in-depth examination of basketball video game greatness

By Thomas Spychalski

Last issue, we talked about the start of basketball video games from Taito's first 'Basketball' arcade cabinet up to the end of the 8-bit era and the NES generation of home consoles.

This time we look at the 16-bit generation and the slew of basketball titles that appeared during the raging war between Nintendo, Sega and the other systems from that time frame, with a short glimpse at basketball video games up to the current gen systems.

The 16-Bit Playoffs:

Of course by now many readers will be familiar with the ins and outs of the 16-bit console war that took place in that era of gaming, mostly between Sega and their Genesis/Megadrive machines and Nintendo, who had the Super Nintendo/Super Famicom, also known as the SNES.

Sega got the head start at this time by releasing the Genesis two years before the Super Nintendo in Japan, Europe and the United States, and three years ahead of Nintendo's console in some South American regions. This head start gave Sega the momentum in the first part of this race as there was not any major competition at the

time in the 16-bit console business.

It is due to this launch gap between the two heavyweights that some of the first basketball video games from that time period are only on the Sega Genesis console.

The Genesis would start off with Lakers VS Celtics and the NBA Playoffs by Electronic Arts in 1991, which was one of the first steps towards the creation of EA Sports and the grandfather of the 'Live' brand of NBA games that would come later on.

The game allowed you to control one of eight NBA teams out of the sixteen that had played in the 1990 NBA playoffs. Game modes were simple in these early days, just exhibition and playoff modes, but this is definitely one of the inspirations for modern NBA and sports games.

This was due to not only the action on the court but the simulation of the NBA arena environment with halftime shows and pre-game player introductions. EA would continue to release two other variations of this type of game play on the Sega Genesis exclusively: Lakers VS Bulls and the NBA Playoffs, which was the same as the previous entry but featuring teams from the 1990-1991 NBA Playoffs and Team USA Basketball, both of which were released in 1992.

Team USA Basketball was a bit different due to being a game based on the USA's 'Dream Team' of the 1992 Oympics held in Spain, the first US Olympic basketball team comprised of NBA superstars. All the Olympic squads from that year were represented as well as an All World Team made up of the best players from the teams outside the United States.

Between these titles the Genesis also got David Robinson's Supreme Court, developed by Acme Interactive and published by Sega themselves in 1991. Despite not having any NBA affiliations besides the use of David Robinson as a player, the game still worked as a simulation style basketball game which stood it's own against the other basketball games at the time of it's release.

One interesting feature of Supreme Court is that it had a 'Role Playing' mode, where a player would meet challenges until he eventually was able to compete against a boss team of sorts, supposedly picked by Robinson himself, the first shades of the modern My Player or Carrier modes.

By 1992 the Super Nintendo had been released in most major markets and jumped on board (following one lone NCAA basketball title) with the next sim basketball game released by EA, Bulls VS Blazers and the NBA Playoffs, which was the last game in the 'VS' series of games and represented the 1991-1992 season of NBA play.

Tecmo would release a sequel to the 8-bit Tecmo NBA Basketball on the NES (A game I sorely neglected last issue-Please see bottom of this article for clarification) in 1993 for both the Genesis and the Super Nintendo.

Super Slam Dunk was another game released that year on the SNES and featured 28 fantasy based teams in an exhibition or playoff mode similar to the previous EA 'VS' titles. The game was endorsed by Magic Johnson and featured play by play and commentary by Chick Hearn, the long time Los Angeles Lakers announcer.

1993 was also the year Electronic Arts released Michael Jordan In Flight for MS-DOS computers. This was really the first '3-D' basketball game of note, featuring a half court game with fictional teams and players. Looking at this game now you could see the seeds were planted for the games coming soon in the 3-D era of gaming.

Although by today's standards the game is pretty rough with dodgy player models and probably the most annoying sound effect ever for dribbling a basketball. There is also no court sideline graphics at all and no crowd, despite the deceiving sound effects that make you think otherwise. The players play against a completely black background, as if lost in a star less void in deep space.

The game also features some very dull and dry voice over work from Michael Jordan himself.

The same year would see EA release NBA Showdown on both the Sega and Nintendo 16-bit platforms, the first of the now yearly EA NBA basketball series to feature all the NBA teams in the league at that time, custom user made teams and also the first game to officially bear the EA Sports label.

There is some debate if the name change was provoked by NBA star Charles Barkley and others refusing to have his name and image used in video games and other NBA products by refusing to sign the licensing agreement.

Indeed the timing seems like this may be the case as the title if EA would have kept the VS/Playoff format would have probably been Bulls VS Suns and the NBA Playoffs based off the actual 1992-1993 NBA season, during which Barkley was a member of the latter team and also the Sun's superstar, which would have made the title much less exciting to fans and gamers alike if one of the main stars was missing.

The next year would see Electronic Arts release NBA Live '95, which was the first game in the Live series which has existed despite some gaps up until the present generation of home consoles and would continue to see yearly releases on both Sega and Nintendo 16-bit machines until NBA Live '97 and NBA Live '98 respectively.
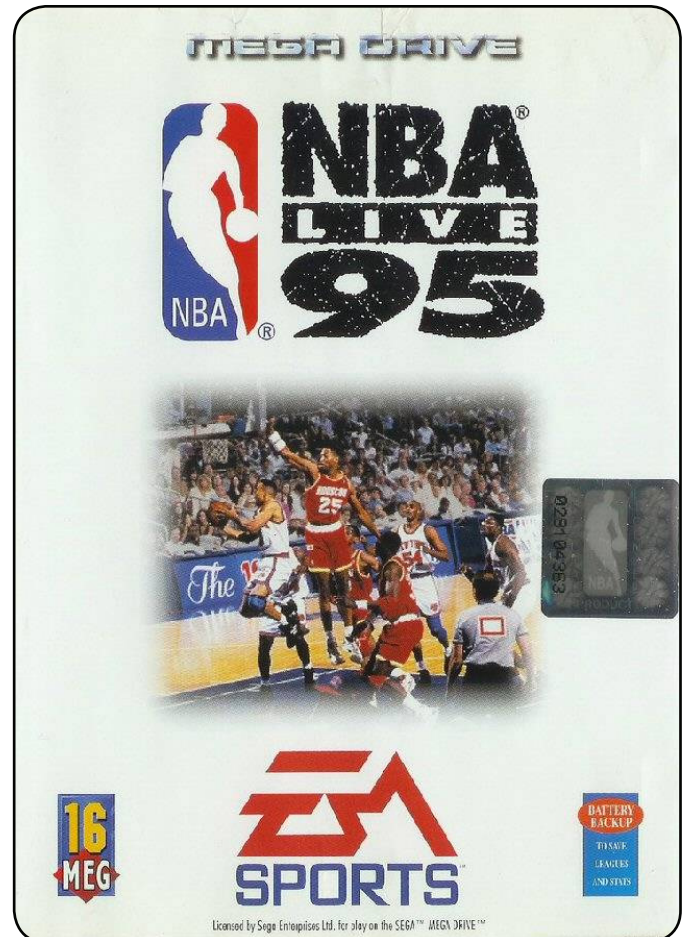
Konami would also not completely give up the basketball games in this generation, releasing a souped up but not as well received sequel to Double Dribble called Double Dribble: The Playoff Edition in 1994 and NBA Give 'n Go in 1995.

Charles Barkley also took his likeness and his talent to the 16-bit era with his two Shut Up and Jam titles. The first for both the SNES and Genesis and the sequel solely for the Genesis.

A Whole New Dimension of Play:

By now everyone was getting poised to release new consoles which in one way or another would capitalize on the improvement of graphical capabilities by having more games in a 3-D setting rather then the 'flat' 2-D games that had been the norm since Space War and Pong.

Although the last generation had been a two way war between Nintendo and Sega, Sega's Genesis/Mega Drive system also ended it's life cycle with time and money wasting add ons to the Genesis in the form of the Sega CD and the 32X.

This was to keep up with Nintendo, which had begun to develop their own CD based add on for the SNES, an idea that infamously lead to the creation of the Playstation by Sony, who were Nintendo's partners with the SNES CD based add on until Nintendo snubbed them in favor of Phillips.

This mistake would lead to a new 'console war,' one in which Sega took a back seat with the Sega Saturn, while Sony and Nintendo duked it out between the Playstation and the N64, Nintendo's entry to that generation of home machines.

Microsoft eventually got into the fray too with it's X-Box console, leading to a great many basketball titles being released in that generation from a few different publishers.

NBA Live made the move to the Playstation with NBA Live '97 and made a yearly game with varying degrees of critical success up until Live 10 on the Playstation 3. EA did indeed make a NBA game for the 2010-2011 season, titled NBA Elite 11. However, it was canceled due to game play issues and glitches discovered before it's release.

This game did get released for the iOS platform and under ten copies have been confirmed to exist from the PS3 version of the game, making it a collector's item. EA did return to the court recently with NBA Live 15 for the PS4 and X-box One, but it did not do well in both terms of reviews and sales.

Konami did not give up in this console generation either, releasing a series of games under the title of In the Zone between 1995 and 1999, primarily for the original Playstation and Nintendo 64. Although these games sold well enough for their time, they never really matched the excitement Live could generate most years.

Midway also tried it's hand at a basketball sim for the Playstation in NBA Fastbreak '98, but the game did poorly and did not become a yearly series (Although it was developed by Visual Concepts, who we will get to shortly).

All of the 'big three' of Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo made attempts at basketball simulations during the time span of the four generations of 3-d gaming at one time at another as well.

Nintendo made NBA Courtside, which was heavily endorsed by L.A. Laker star Kobe Bryant. This series was decent enough considering both it's age and the fact that the hard to develop for Nintendo 64 was where it got it's start, making the competition more scarce then it was for Sony's Playstation system.

This series was short lived seeing two releases for the N64 and one for the Nintendo Gamecube in 2001. Besides having In the Zone and Live to sell to eager virtual ballers, Sony and the Playstation also had it's

own NBA based simulation called NBA Shootout, which eventually came to be made by Sony's 989 Sports team.

This series ran until the 2003-2004 season on the PS1 and PS2 consoles before becoming known as just NBA and NBA: The Inside after SCE San Diego took over the various sports properties that 989 Sports had been developing for years. That series ran until 2009 on the PS2 and PS3 before breathing it's last with NBA: The Inside 10, which was released only for Sony's hand held console the Playstation Portable.

Microsoft started releasing entries in the series NBA: Inside Drive on the X-Box in 2002 all the way until the 2003-2004 season. This was not Microsoft's first NBA entry however with Inside Drive getting it's origins on the Windows PC platform in 1999-2000 and NBA: Full Court Press in 1996, also for Windows based computers.

Inside Drive's demise is unclear as it had some good outings on the X-Box in it's short life on the system but perhaps it was the new competition from a new NBA simulation series that came around at about the same time and a competitor who definitely showed that 'they got next.'

It's Gotta be the 'K':

The continuing story of the basketball video game leads us back to Sega, who had trouble keeping up in the console arms race with the Sega Saturn entry. Despite a hand full of great games on the system like Nights Into Dreams and Panzer Dragoon Saga, the console was pretty much a commercial flop and Sega began plans for yet another piece of hardware, hopefully one that would have more success then it's Genesis add ons and the Saturn.

But amongst the games in the Saturn library was a NBA series called NBA Action, as the second and last game released for the Saturn was developed by a company called Visual Concepts, who had experience with a variety of gaming platforms since the 8-bit era and had also helped develop NHL Hockey '97 for both the Playstaion and Saturn with the game being published by EA Sports.

When Sega's new console, the Dreamcast, arrived at retail, it was a system before it's time that sadly also died before it's logical lifespan as well. Beyond the ingenuity of the on board modem, groundbreaking game projects

like Shenmue and arcade perfect ports of popular arcade titles, amongst other things, the Dreamcast would also unleash a revolution in sports video games.

NBA 2K, NHL 2K and NHL 2K (The 2K baseball series started in 2002.) all brought improvement to their respective sports with excellent graphics, stellar and tight game play and enhanced presentation techniques.

Fans of both sports and video games alike started to consider the 2K range of titles the best simulations of real life sporting events. So much so that when NFL 2K5 started to really dig into EA's yearly Madden sales they paid for the rights to do NFL based games exclusively, blocking the developer that would eventually come to be known as 2K Games from making a pro football rival each year.

The original NBA 2K game that was released on the Dreamcast in 1999 was miles above even the best entries in any previous NBA based series and the little details in the presentation and on the sidelines of the court also made this series seem like the true wearer of the NBA crown.

Gamers might still occasionally throw an errant pass out of bounds because they thought the referees running along with the teams was another player by mistake, but the fact that Sega and Visual Concepts/2K Games
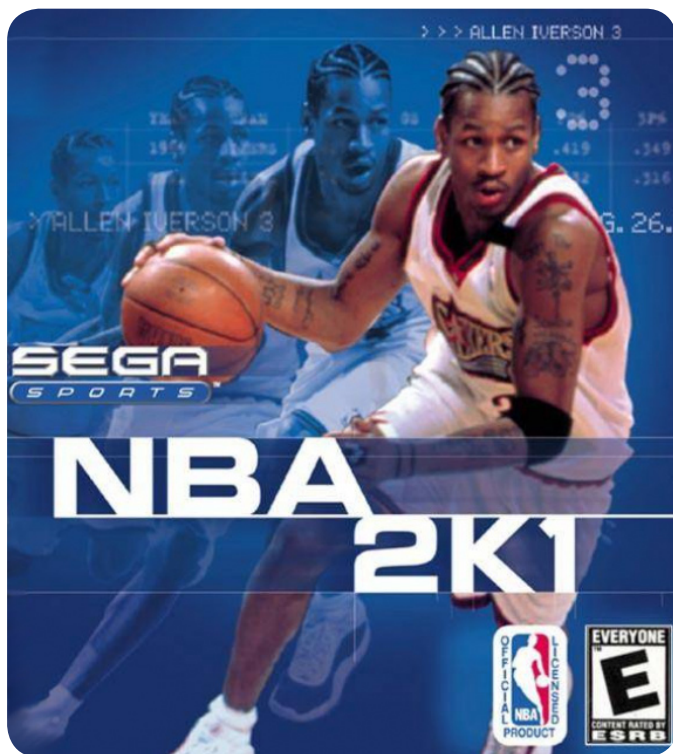
created a very detailed simulation that took out or held it's own with most of the major competition in the sports genre speaks volumes about the trio of Visual Concepts, Sega and indeed the Dreamcast's important role in shaping gaming trends that lasted long after it's sad demise in 2001.

The NBA 2K series continues to be the top dog in basketball simulation games to this day, seemingly never satisfied with it's yearly product as updates have included better franchise mode options, innovative control schemes that are fluid and work well overall and also new game modes like the My Player addition, which is the mode people play the most of today over the standard exhibition, season, playoff and franchise experiences.

However 2K Games should never become too comfy atop it's mountain because that sort of lack of improvement is ultimately what drove the NBA Live series into the grave.

Arcade Action:
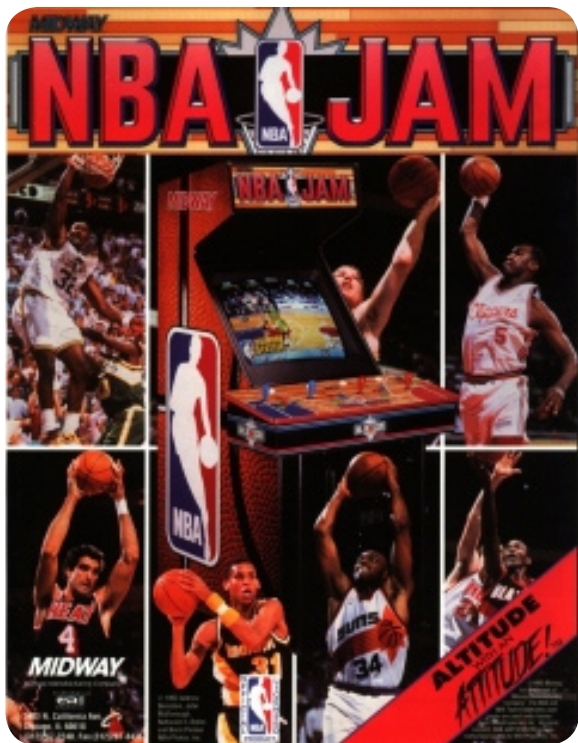
Throughout the 3-D era, arcade style basketball games did the same as their simulation counter parts; they evolved. Although the first few games of this genre was filled with NBA Jam remakes, ports and clones after NBA Jam's popular debut in arcades and eventually on home consoles.

Games like NBA Hoopz and Showtime: NBA on NBC were fun, but were really nothing different than what had been accomplished time and time again.

NBA Street was one such arcade style game that branched out from that formula, or at the very least gave it some much needed depth. Part of the EA Sports 'Big' line of sports games, NBA Street is an over the top version of the sport, with various challenges along the way to making your player the king of the park, blacktop and eventually the NBA.

The series has had a hard time keeping the formula fresh from time to time, but when the basic ingredients are good sometimes you can get away with less seasoning. One notable tid bit is the Gamecube version of NBA Street V3, which featured a Nintendo All Stars team, where Mario and the gang battled it out against the best players in the NBA.

NBA Ballers was another notable series to take this approach, which was to also concentrate of the life of your player off the court to a degree as well as on. You worked your way up from scrub to greatest of all time and got to buy some virtual bling along the way as well.

In summation, I hope you have enjoyed reading this abridged history of basketball video games. There are of course many games I did not mention, because there are literally a ton of basketball or basketball related titles and this already long article would have been the size of a small book.

However to me, that proves how invaluable basketball games have been in the journey of video gaming from the Atari to the Playstation 4, from baskets and courts being barely recognizable pixels to almost picture perfect arenas replicated in high definition graphics.

Note: In the first part of this article last issue I made a glaring omission by not mentioning Tecmo's NBA Basketball for the NES, which was released in 1992, right near the end of the NES' lifespan.

The omission was a terrible mistake on my part because this game was one that continued Tecmo's tradition of great NES sports based games it had established in football with the infamous Tecmo Super Bowl. It was the first game to feature all current NBA teams and was the best NBA game on the NES.

I apologize for the unintentional foul, you readers get two free throws for that one.

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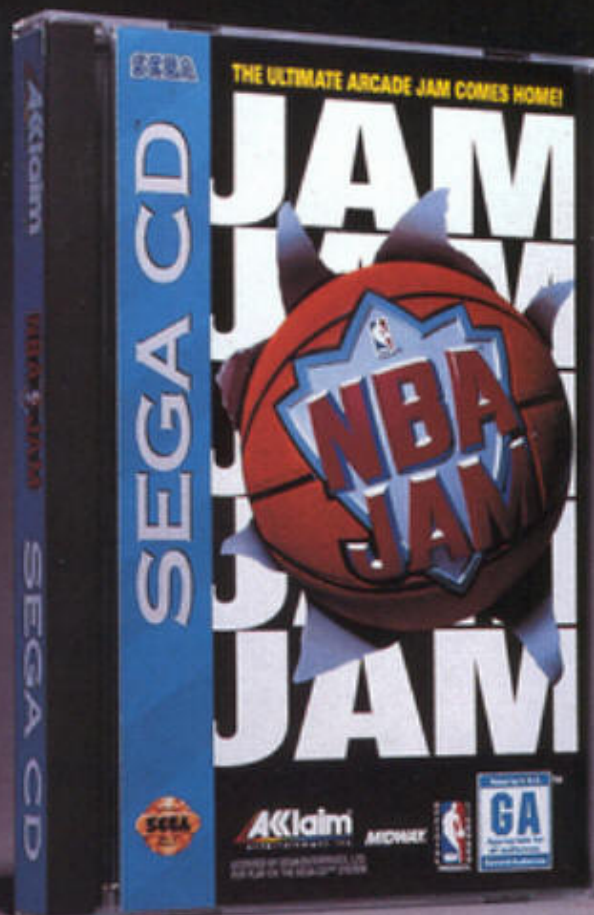
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BoomShakaLaka!! NBA JAM Set the Bar Very High for an Entire Genre of Action Sports Titles and Lead the Wave of a New Arcade Renaissance
By Josh LaFrance

Anyone who played in an arcade in the 90's probably heard 3 things. 1) 'He's on fire!" 2) 'BoomShakaLaka!!" and 3) 'Rejected!"

NBA Jam burned so many catch phrases in our minds that it is just a part of popular culture at this point. That puts this game right up there with the arcade greats such as Pac-Man and Pong, a game that leaves a mark so indelible that even non-gamers have heard sound bites from the game at one point or another. This is quite the feat for a sports game, which is something that up to that point only sports fans had any desire to play.

The mark of a good game is one that makes itself accessible to players no matter the demographic. This is where NBA Jam truly shines. You don't have to be a sports fan or one who follows one of the many NBA teams. If you play this game you will have fun. Midway truly hit it out of the park (sorry for the sports pun) with the release of NBA Jam in 1993. The premise is very simple. Pick an NBA team and play against a friend (or friends) in a frantic, action packed 2-on-2 game of basketball. The dunks are ridiculous and the physics are completely wacky, which adds to the fun. At no point does the game take itself serious. Although one could play against the computer, where the game shines is in 1 vs 1 or 2 vs 2 competition against a real live opponent.

NBA Jam literally launched a whole genre of wacky, high-flying action sports titles such as NFL Blitz and NHL Hitz, although NBA Jam certainly ended up being the best of the bunch.

You know that it must be a great game when it helps launch the renaissance of the video game arcade. This game did exactly that, helping usher in the 2nd major, (although even more brief then the 80's) arcade era in the early to mid 1990s. NBA Jam generated over $1 billion dollars in revenue and in 1994 was declared the highest earning arcade title of all time.

Ross Sillifant brings us a fantastic interview this month as he sits down with game design legend Simon Butler to discuss his console work and his views on the current state of gaming.

Having worked on over 260+ titles since his entry into the profession in 1983, Simon offers a unique glimpse into the history of video gaming and we here at Classic Console Magazine hope you enjoy this interview!

Ross Sillifant: I'm going to start by asking about your one and only Atari 8 Bit project, if my information is correct.. I believe you were responsible for the graphics on A8 version of The Never Ending Story, assuming this was true, I'm wondering what your thoughts were on the A8 hardware, as an artist and also if you can recall any insights from within Ocean Software itself, regarding how they viewed the A8 range, from a commercial development point of view.

Simon Butler: This particular title was supposed to be my swansong. I planned to leave the industry and return to my career in advertising in London.

Ian Weatherburn convinced me to do this final title for what was then a very lucrative sum, so I knuckled down and completed the entire graphics list in eleven hours. I suppose it did help that I had already done two versions so it was just a case of attempting to emulate the existing images on the latest machine.

As for the hardware I am sad to say that time and encroaching age have consigned pretty much every detail of this title to the mists of forgetfulness so other than being able to say that I did do the graphics on this there are no other details that come to mind.

These titles were done on a freelance basis and I had virtually no dealings with Ocean whatsoever, so their views on anything at that juncture were a mystery.

On a similar note I could not begin to guess what projects were in development for the 8 bit Atari, I was simply a pixel-monkey for hire.

RS: Sticking with the 8 Bit hardware for a while, i believe you did the fantastic title page artwork for ZX Spectrum Dan Dare 2? Now, i'm a HUGE Dan Dare fan, loved the 1st 2 games, dissapointed by the 3rd, but point i'm getting at here is: the 1st 2 Dan Dare games were developed at a time when software houses decided to write 'specific' versions of the Dan Dare games for the host hardware, so they C64 version was different to the Zx Spectrum version, but both brilliant games.

So, as an artist and coder yourself, would you have preferred more companies to follow a similar approach, even if...realistically speaking in terms of resources it would of required, it just wasn't ever going to be a reality? Also...were you, yourself a fan of the Eagle Comic's character?

SB: Firstly, I did the title screen only and this was for the third version which you found so disappointing. I had left Ocean at this point and once again was doing work for hire. I contacted Probe and got a few small title screen jobs, Dan Dare 3 being one of them.

As for their coding practices I am not in a position to say, but on a general note I would have preferred to do machine-specific versions of titles, alas this seldom if ever was the case which might explain the large number of less-than-stellar titles on my CV.

But I am an artist and not a coder, so we pixel pushers did the best we could on the machine at hand, the design mostly being done by someone else or in Ocean's case not

at all with a large number of their titles being arcade conversions.

I was a fan of Dan Dare although I was savvy enough to recognize his intrinsic 'Englishness" that almost certainly prevented him reaching a much wider audience.

RS: In the twilight years of the 8 Bit hardware, we saw various attempts to prolong the life of the aging machines and also to try and take on the likes of the NES and the Master System which were grabbing headlines and getting attention, so we saw the likes of the C64GS, which allowed games like Battle Command, enhanced Amstrad Hardware like the CPC+ range and GX4000 and of course the Sam Coupe.

Looking back at these, do you feel any really ever had any chance of making in-roads into the market, or had the market simply reached the point where it was time to embrace 16 Bit gaming, be it ST/Amiga/MD etc?

SB: I had a fairly busy time during the 8 bit era so when things started to cool a little during the emergence of the 16 bit machines I was fairly tired of the limitations inherent in the Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad regardless of my affections for all three.

I was eager to spread my wings and work with larger sprites, more colours and hopefully more involving game design and gameplay so I jumped at the chance to work on the Atari ST and the Amiga when the offer came along, especially as Ocean had been very vocal about not planning to move away from the 8 bit machines for some considerable time.

Needless to say this announcement proved to be incorrect and I missed out on titles like Robocop and the Untouchables, but it's all water under the bridge and I soon found myself back within Central Street working on Total Recall for Ocean under less than perfect circumstances.

The market is ruled by businessmen and they had new machines they wanted to sell, so the 8 bit machines were hurried off into the wings, some say before their time.

Whether this is indeed the case I wouldn't like to say. We had all done some things we were very proud of on these old warhorses along with some we would sooner forget, but they most certainly could have continued but I feel it would simply have been a case of more of the same rather than being able to push them to doing anything new and original.

RS: Also, i believe you worked on a few games that made it to the GX4000 and C64GS... namely Navy Seals and Gazza 2, could you talk us through your involvement in these 2 and also what you'd of liked to do on the 'enhanced' 8 Bit hardware, had things been different?

SB: My involvement with Navy Seals was simply some cut scene image creation for the Gameboy while Gazza 2 was done during my hiatus from Ocean in late 1989 or 1990. The whole Gazza project was something

I was trying to get finished as quickly as possible while attempting to somehow fix the utter shambles

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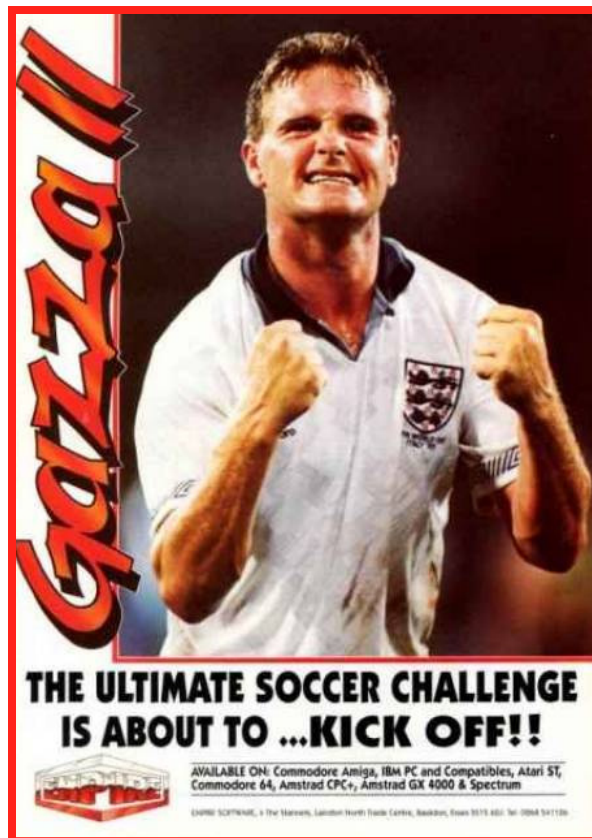
that was Total Recall.

What machines were involved in the development of Gazza 2 is again something I have consigned to the 'not to be revisited" drawer in the old memory banks.

Plus, its 25 years ago and a lot of things have happened since then. That entire period while with the development house concerned was stressful to put it mildly and thankfully well behind me.

RS: Ocean Software often takes a lot of 'flak' for having such a polarized range of software under it's belt. It set new standards in terms of quality so often, yet seemed just as happy

to set new standards for the worst games to grace a system. Do you feel a lot of people tend to over-look the fact that Ocean, to put it simply, was just another buisness venture? I mean it should be viewed as that, as a buisness; and it had deadlines, budgets, H.R etc. to take care of and thus you simply were going to get a wide range of products, not everything was going to be released on time, properly finished or indeed released at all.

Also when dealing with Coin-Op conversions what might work 'well' on the ZX Spectrum might struggle on the C64 and vice versa and in terms of getting movie licenses, often by the time they'd bought the rights, sorted out the advertising, wasn't there simply not much left in the pot to put to producing an actual bloody game?

SB: Ocean did indeed take a lot of flak, some of it justified but most of the time the criticism was unfair due to the fact that a large number of their stinkers were created out of house so sometimes things either slipped under the radar and you found yourself with a turkey that you had to release because of deadlines or the team in question were lazy, talentless or shiftless and thought they could pull the wool over Ocean's collective eyes.

I know this for a fact having worked for one of those teams. They truly believed that poor design and shoddy coding would escape the attention of the powers-that-be at Ocean due to the number of titles they released at any given point.

Needless to say, they were wrong in their assumptions and Ocean soon dropped them like the proverbial hot brick. I had jumped ship by this time due to their lackluster work practices and was now in-house at Ocean.

A lot of the negative press was due to the fact that the movie licenses started to become very formulaic with each one having several different gameplay mechanics; a platform section (with the obligatory packing crates), a car section, a sliding puzzle section...wash, rinse, repeat.

While being guilty of designing and working on several titles of this ilk I do agree with those who tired of the apparently lazy design but I then have to point out that we worked under very strict guidelines from the movie studios.

We were possibly unable to kill the main character, or they didn't want the game to be seen as violent although the movie itself would have a PG or even Adult rating.

These restrictions forced our hands at times and so when deadlines were continually looming unlike the industry of today, we did not have two or three years to throw ideas around. We had to come up with a concept in days and then get the game into shape in fairly short order.

It is only truly with the gift of hindsight that you can say that 'yes, Ocean was simply a business." This is mostly due to the Bedrooms to Billions documentary where Jon Woods states this fact in very open and simple terms.

Ocean was their latest venture, it would work or it would fail. They were not gamers; they didn't 'care" about the games, they cared about them selling in large numbers, but the content was not something they gave much consideration.

Whether something would translate from a 'high-end" arcade machine onto the 8 bit machines seldom if

ever crossed their minds I would assume.

They saw the latest fads in the arcades and they bought the 'hot" games; we were simply told 'convert that." Whether we could or not didn't matter, we had our orders so we did as we were told to the best of our abilities.

It was never a financial issue that affected the quality of the games, it was time and the restrictions of the machines compared to the seemingly limitless capabilities of the target machines we were told to translate onto the home computers.

It was business, pure and simple.

RS: I have to ask about your role on Platoon. Quite simply THE best Movie conversion to the humble C64 I have ever played. It 'felt' like a real 'labour of love', everything set to the highest standards-graphics were fantastic, atmospheric and ideally suited it seemed to the C64's colour palette.

The tunnel system and bunker stages in particular just blew me away, tunnel's were cramped, tense experiences and that bloody V.C leaping out the water with a knife at your throat was superbly done. It seemed every attempt was made not only to follow the events of the film as closely as possible, but also, for those who'd never seen the film, to be given a superb game in it's own right, where you really did feel like you were fighting to save your soul, every step of the way.

The game also seemed simply to 'work best' on the C64. I tried the Spectrum, ST and NES versions over a number of years, none ever came close to the C64 version in my eyes.

Would you say it was easier to bring

the game to 'justice' on any particular format?

SB: Platoon is one of a handful of titles I can truly say I am honoured to have been involved with and proud of what came to fruition from my untidy scribbling during the design process.

I was sent to a private screening of the movie in London and remember vividly me stumbling out into the daylight thinking 'How the hell do I translate that into something palatable for young children?"
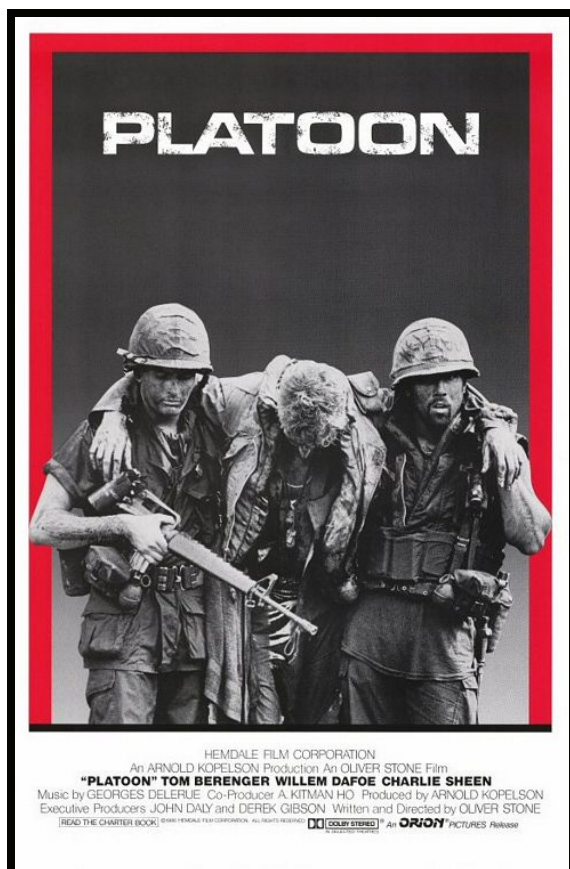
I have no recollection of any bolt of lightning that clarified matters, but somehow it all fell together and Gary Bracey was exceptionally enthusiastic and helpful during the whole process, which as mentioned earlier was not allowed to drag out

for weeks, so quite swiftly I put the design together on a variety of tatty pieces of paper and then did some story-board work which showed the team exactly how things should look on screen.

Mark Jones has some of them to this very day while others were given away as prizes in a competition in one of the magazines.

No one version was any easier to design for, simply because we didn't work that way. There were no versions with extra levels or additional or different content, they all followed the same guidelines and to be truthful I couldn't say that any one version was better or more successful than another.

I oversaw the development of the three 8-bit versions and the others were done out of house.

The game as a whole was received pretty well by the press and is fondly remembered by people like yourself even after all these years, which is a bonus.

RS: Moving onto the 16 Bit era, starting with your work on ARC's '9 Lives' (ST and Amiga). RAZE magazine claimed an Atari Lynx version was 'under condsideration', but as i've found, after looking into so many Lost Game claims, what you read in UK Press more often than not turned out to be be utter B.S...so i'm wondering if you knew of any plans for conversion of it, to the Lynx?

SB: 9 Lives was an attempt at creating a character-driven platformer but it all got horribly out of hand, mainly due to the terrible scroll on the Atari ST and me not sticking to any kind of

sizing regime for the sprites.
They were either too big, or not big enough... it was fun, but not successful in any sense of the word.

What versions were due after the creation of the two 16 bit titles is beyond me, it certainly wouldn't have worked on the Lynx. It didn't work on either the ST or the Amiga.

My fault, but at least I learned a lot about animation while working on this project and a lot of this knowledge has come in very handy in the ensuing years.

RS: You did work on The Adams Family for Ocean on SNES, Amiga, MD and ST according to various sites online, but your often down as 'Addtional Graphics', so i'm wondering just what your role was in the game and which versions you worked on and what enhancements you were allowed to do on the more powerful platforms? I.E. a ST version wouldn't be 'welcome' on the SNES per say.....

SB: I was indeed just called in to create 'additional graphics" on Addams Family, but regardless of my role this is one project that will

always hold a very special place in my memory.

Warren (Lancashire) and Jamie Higgins put together a superb title that was sadly reduced in intended size due to the pressures of an impending games convention in America. I was called in at a very early stage to take some of the pressure off Warren who was working on game and level design as well as creating all the background graphics
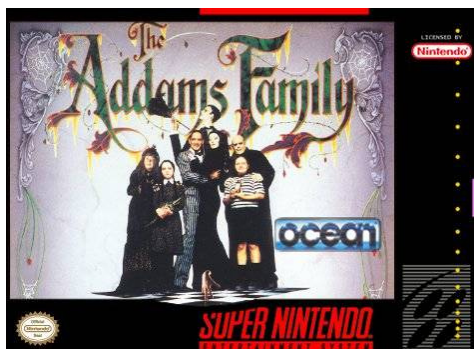
and a lot of enemy sprites.
I did the introduction with Thing beckoning people into the game; that is actually my hand which we photographed and which I then drew frame by frame.

My brief for the enemy sprites that I created was one of the most liberating, vague, yet creative instructions I have received in my thirty years of games development. 'Draw Stuff."

I knew the premise, creepy, spooky and altogether ooky…so 'drawing stuff" that fitted the bill was a joy. I drew hundreds of daft creatures, worked on some truly bizarre animations and while the vast majority never made the cut, I enjoyed every moment.

Addams was a truly fine title and while it never reached the dizzy heights it aspired to it is a class act. RS: I see you down for things like 'main sprite design' on Dennis The Menace (SNES)……. 'Main Character animation' on Adams Family: Pugsleys Scavenger Hunt (SNES) etc-so, i'm wondering how it felt to be working on specific aspects of a game. Did it allow you to focus on the task in hand a lot better or did you ever feel your talent was being 'wasted' as you could be doing this and a lot more besides, in terms of art/coding for the game in question?

SB: I actually designed Dennis and tried my best to oversee the project, but things were fraught at that juncture and it got away from me more than somewhat so it proved to be the death knell of my involvement with Ocean for many varied reasons.

I was called in prior to this to help out on Pugsley because the team involved were deep into development and everything appeared to be going swimmingly with the main character once again being Gomez.

Suddenly they were informed that as this project was based on the forthcoming animated TV show rather than a live action movie, the main characters were to be the two children.

To save the lead artist having to drop what he was doing and create a new character from scratch I volunteered and did the Pugsley sprites one evening and that was pretty much my entire involvement

with that particular project.

I never felt my talent was being wasted at any point during my years with Ocean; I simply did what was asked of me to the best of my abilities.

As an artist I would do whatever graphics were required and when the need arose and should I be called upon for design work then I was always more than willing to step up to the mark.

That was how things were back then; you did what was needed at a moment's notice and helped out as much as possible.

RS: You worked on the 'background art' for Ultraverse Prime, which I believe was originally intended for the SNES, but ended up on the Sega CD. So, i'm wondering why it changed platforms, what sort of

headaches it caused you as an artist (MCD could display less colours, plus fewer to choose from etc.) and what enhancements being a MCD game allowed, if any....

SB: After my 'departure" from Ocean several of us found ourselves working for Malibu Interactive.

It sounded like it was a dream come true; working for a games company that also had its own string of comic books to feed the development stream. Sadly, it didn't quite pan out and it all fell apart pretty quickly.

As for what machines the titles were originally destined for I couldn't say. It was quite shambolic from start to finish so I have tried to put that period behind me as much as possible.

RS: Towards the end of the 16 Bit console era and dawn of the then, Next-Generation of 'superconsoles', the industry seemed very unsure just what the future was, for gaming.....

On the one hand, interactive fims were being strutted around, along with talk of multi-media (CD-i, MCD etc), yet at the same time, polygon 3D was The Next Big Thing as powerful new arcade hardware (Namco's Winnning Run, Sega's Virtua Racing etc) being shown off, cue the SNES SFX chip and Sega's DSP on MD Virtua Racing doing the rounds.

So as an artist, did you suddenly 'fear' the death of 2D in gaming as being seen as important anymore and what this would mean to you, professionally?

I ask as the first of the 'Super Consoles' not to have much thought given it seems to the 2D sides of things, was the 3DO, which many coders seem to feel wasn't as powerful as the SNES in aspects like 2D, seemed to indicate a shift in where industry was headed.

SB: I have always worried about the 'death" of 2D and struggled accordingly for many years due to the fact that I never moved into the polygonal side of things for one reason or another.

Fortunately, the indie side of the industry appears to have revived the humble pixel and it seems to be getting the respect it deserves.

Currently I am involved with two 2D projects; one pixel based and the other vector based, but I have always felt that 3D brings more problems than it solves.

Don't get me wrong, I love the 3D console titles, but it's while I play them that I sometimes feel that these vast worlds that are created are mostly a waste of time and money because the great majority of those titles that aren't free roaming have a lot of wasted space that must have cost an arm and a leg while the game design forces players to mostly ignore almost everything around them simply to get from 'pretty and incredibly detailed point A" to 'equally pretty and incredibly detailed point B" with less than a cursory glance at whatever 'pretty and incredibly detailed graphics" surround you.

With 2D you almost always see everything that is on screen.

I'm far from the greatest pixel artist in the business and would be the first to admit that some pixel pushers out there just hurt my head with their skills, but I enjoy what I do and I'm fairly competent so I'll keep pushing pixels until I drop.

RS: Sticking with hardware like the Super FX chip in the SNES, rumours of Atari's Panther console, Sega's MCD, the Atari Lynx and later Atari's Jaguar and Sega's 32X and Saturn all 2D powerhouses in their own right...

Did the 'fickle' nature of both the industry and the press ever really 'piss you off' as it were? Suddenly EVERYTHING had to be pushing as many polygons per second as possible, all texture-maps, light-sourcing, frames per second etc etc, who cared if the games were shallow, the controls unresponsive, the frame rates erratic and games simply no fun to play and all the while the rich potential to deliver groundbreaking 2D games was being ignored, as marketing experts said they couldn't sell 2D anymore....

I paid £270 on day 1 for a MCD only to see Sega pretty much ignore the hardware's 2D abilities, going for FMV instead, Atari could of done a damn sight more to get UK developers to bring Amiga/ST games to the Lynx, but this was nothing compared to the 3DO/Jaguar era, where after spending £229 on a Jaguar, I watched in horror as Atari tried to compete with 3DO/Saturn/PS1 in terms of texture-mapping and polygon 3D, when the system had such superb 2D potential.

In your view and personal experiences, just who suddenly decided THEY knew best in terms of what the public wanted and that wasn't 2D and 2D was to be sneered at as 'old hat' and thus hardware which embraced it, was unfairly treated by the media.

SB: I suppose it's no different from people saying the horseless carriage would never catch on.

I wasn't daft enough to think that polygons were a fad and merely a nine day wonder. I knew they were here to stay and for a while I dabbled with polygons but for a wide variety

of reasons I just never stuck with it and I pretty much painted myself into a corner as this pixel-pushing dinosaur at a time when 2D was the last thing on anyone's mind.

Then, Pokemon rescued the pixel for a while and I was one of a very small group of guys doing 2D so at that period I had a great freelance career and took on enough work to allow me to outsource to artists around the globe.

Then it fizzled out again and once more I stumbled along desperately looking for work, but somehow I have always managed to survive and here I am again up to my ears in 2D game graphics development.

I have no idea who makes these decisions about what the market needs and why?

I really couldn't care less, especially now when I am in my third decade of game development and I see the industry changing to something so all-embracing that it is almost a certainty that all types of games will co-exist from now on, be they 2D or 3D.

The industry is large enough and the market flexible enough to handle everything. Plus, the internet has killed the need for a publisher pretty much. Once upon a time you couldn't release a game unless it was through a major publisher. These days that simply isn't true, which can only be a good thing and might even allow me to keep on making games well into my fourth decade.

RS: Leading on from above, would it be fair to say you were personally very 'thankful' for platforms like the Nintendo: GBC and GBA, which still allowed 2D developers like yourself to 'shine' and have a key role in the industry?.

(I see you involved in likes of:X-Men:Regin Of Apocalypse on GBA, Army Men Advance GBA, Tiny Toons Adventures GBC, Garfield And His 9 Lives on GBA, Leisure Suit Larry on Mobile phone etc etc).

How did it feel to see the industry embracing 2D once again with likes of PSN/XBL etc offerring up a viable platform for games, Nintendo releasing a 2D version of the 3DS (Industry always seems hell bent on dragging up concepts, then abandoning them, before returning to them years later: Motion Control, 3D TV, Home VR, Multi-Media etc etc).

SB: As I mentioned earlier, once the Pokemon titles arrived on the GameBoy I suddenly found myself in demand. It was a great time to be a pixel pusher.

I was exceptionally busy and once again hooked up with several of the old Ocean artists who I knew would deliver and depend on. They were totally reliable and exceptional to work with.

The only downside of this brief but successful period was the fact that I now had clients in a variety of time-zones so I was forced to sit at my desk in my house for ridiculously long hours waiting for someone on the other side of the world to get into their office and then call me in the early hours of the morning while my entire family were all upstairs fast asleep.
But they were great times and while

I know that my old bones couldn't really take it these days I would be tempted to at least attempt it again for a short period. It kept you on your toes and made you think quickly and creatively. You didn't have time to prevaricate and drag things out.

That's one of the reasons there is more than 300 titles on my CV, I just knuckle down and get things done. It doesn't always pan out but sometimes you can't afford to get precious about things or over think them.

RS: Did you ever feel frustrated that Hand Held games never got the same amount of coverage as PC/home Console games got in the press? (mere column type reviews or round up's rather than full page reviews)

Also, as an artist did you worry that many might not have seen all you'd put into a game as they gave up very early on- (thinking of: Ocean's Vindicator on the 8 Bit Micro's, aka Green Beret II as i had the C64 version and by god the opening level; the never ending maze, did my bloody head in. Itwent on for ever, I never seemed to have a 'scooby' where I was going, boredom set in so land many others simply gave up on it.)

SB: I never thought about things in that way and to be honest I still don't.

I've never lost any sleep about machine A being seen as being superior to machine B or anything like that.

I didn't really think about my career much at all until I found myself on the retro convention circuit and

was invited to sit on some Q&A sessions.

It was only then that I realised that I had simply put my efforts into surviving to pay the bills and keep a roof over my family's collective heads and not really examined what it was I did for a living.

People seemed surprised when I spoke at one particular convention and said that I had only recently realised that for 25 years or more it was 'just a job".

I certainly enjoyed what I did and I loved the industry then and now, but there it wasn't a labour of love. It's not like I was a musician or an artist and attempting to create something for posterity.

Back in the 8bit days we were simply going to work every day and if our jobs involved the creation of computer games then that is what we did. We never thought that we would be talking to people about them 25 or even thirty years later. We seldom thought about our public, if ever.

Of course we attempted to do the best job we could, but once that game was out of the door then it was just a case of 'what's next? On to the next title."

So apart from the Spectrum/64 wars I never really thought about this being better than that or deserving more press coverage. I was concentrating on staying in the job I had or finding

another role while thinking about the bills and the mortgage.

Sounds dull, but that's how it was. Now things have changed.

RS: How did you get to be involved in the fan-made sequel to Great Giana sisters, Gianas Return (GP2X, GP32, Dreamcast etc) and any future plans for more fan-made sequels to games from the ST/Amiga era?

SB: Well you've pretty much answered the question yourself.

Fans of the original game and fans of my work tracked me down and asked me if I would do some graphics for them.

The answer as it always is, was yes Since then I've done four versions of SQRXZ which has been released on a wide variety of machines. (http://www.sqrxz.de/)

Because they are fans and not professional developers they seldom have any funds, so their requests are dependent on being able to come up with the 'readies".
I'm not Albert Schweitzer, I'm not a charity.

Mercenary? Not really, it's a job and I need to live.

RS: I have to ask, which games have you worked on that sadly never saw the light of day and how 'saddened' are you they never reached completition? Also, were you ever approached to do any work on the likes of the: Konix Multi-System/ Atari:Lynx, Jaguar, Panther, 7800, XEGS or Nuon, anything exotic lurking out there?.

To the best of my knowledge there have only been two titles that I worked on which never saw the light of day. One was the third title to be developed along with Ian Weatherburn using his text/graphical adventure engine that he created for The Never Ending Story and Hunchback the Adventure.

That project was Batman the Adventure, which was fully completed if memory serves correctly but it disappeared once delivered to Ocean and nothing more was seen of it after that.

I think they just decided that it was too similar to our two previous titles for them and just said 'thanks but no thanks."

The second project that never came to fruition was a matter of weeks from

completion when UbiSoft pulled the plug. That was a 2D side-on version of The Settlers for the GBC. I put a ton of effort into the animations for the characters and was really proud of my achievements so when they simply called one day and told the powers that be that they just didn't want the project anymore I was more than a tad miffed.

That's business, that's life. Onwards and upwards.

RS: Finally Simon, any 'advice' for anyone looking to get started in the industry today and what are you, yourself up to these days?

SB: As we speak I am working on my own project that will hopefully bring some artistic and financial freedom and start a new part of my career.

As well as this I am working in Holland on a project that has not been without it's problems but is now progressing smoothly and will be quite a big deal in the latter part of 2015.

On the advice side of things well strangely enough I was called upon pretty recently to assist the nephew of a good friend in his efforts to gain a foothold in the games industry and I leapt at the opportunity.

Even more interesting than the fact that anyone would think I could be of any use was the fact that this young man has little or no interest in learning polygons and only plays games from the 8 and 16 bit eras.

But I digress. If you want to get into games, do it.

These days it literally is as simple as that. Google 'game developers" and you'll lose your life reading a list that goes on forever. The doors once held firmly closed by publishers has been thrown wide open by the advent of the internet, Steam, online gaming etc.

'The secret to getting ahead is getting started."

Mark Twain said that and it's plain and simple but in that simplicity lies the secret to success. Whether that success ever decides to come my way is another matter entirely, I should follow my own advice really.

But for anyone reading this…it's out there. Whatever you want is within your grasp. Love what you do, don't run before you can walk and learn the basics first.

Games are rewarding, not only as players but as creators. They can tell stories and they can lead you down pathways you never thought existed.

They can bring you together to discuss them, analyze them and in doing so make you realise that they are not just silly little games. They are not trite or stupid or meaningless.

They are amazing.
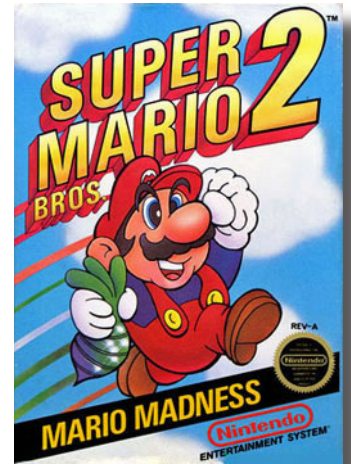
Out of all of the Games in the Original Super Mario Brothers Trilogy, Super Mario Brothers 2 is the One Most Frequently Overlooked. This Game Stands on it's Own as a Very Unique and Fun Title.

By Amy Trinanes

I consider myself a Super Mario connoisseur, I grew up playing it and unfortunately because of my extreme bias I never really chose to play much else (aside from sonic and the occasional Zelda).

Fortunately for you, my friends, and my family that meant that I was always the go-to Mario expert for any Mario questions they may have had (Honestly there were never really any Mario questions, but hey I was available...). My go to game was Super Mario 3 and Super Mario World, and in past articles I gave the title of the best Mario game to Super Mario World. Well in this article I give the worst Mario game to Super Mario Bros. 2.

Now before you start yelling at your virtual magazine that I am wrong, keep in mind I am NOT saying it is a bad game, it's a fun change from the normal Super Mario games, and a game that I still enjoy playing from time to time.

The first time I played #2 was when my Dad bought us a Super Nintendo (yay!). Picture it, Connecticut, 1994, my living room, and me smack dab in front of the TV. Aside from my mother yelling from the kitchen that I shouldn't be sitting so close to the TV, it was just me and my brand new Super Mario All-stars game cartridge. I turned on the game and recognized the Mario 1 and 3, but to my surprise there were two new games that I had never played before, The Lost Levels and Super Mario Bros 2. I was ecstatic, I was only 6 so in my little world only two

Mario games existed, and when I found out there was a Super Mario Bros 2 I could barely hang on to my Dunk-a-roos.

You may or may not know that the Mario game titled The Lost Levels, is actually the REAL Super Mario 2. When Nintendo created The Lost Levels, they made it more difficult than its predecessor, and with that they came to the conclusion that it would be too difficult for Americans, and they did not want Americans to get frustrated with the game and give up on the Mario brand.

Super Mario Bros 2. (USA version) was released in 1988 as an easier alternative to The Lost Levels. This game is nothing like the original Mario games, no Mushroom

Kingdom, no Bowser or Goombas. If you didn't see Mario on the screen you might actually not even realize it's a Mario game. There's a reason for that…it actually was not originally created as a Mario game. In 1987 Japan released a game called Yume Kōjō: Doki Doki Panic to promote the Yume Kōjō 87 festival. Nintendo took the characters from the Mario games and placed them into Doki Doki Panic, and viola, Super Mario Bros 2 for the USA was born.

The great thing about Super Mario 2 was that it inspired a lot of future games, to this day you will still see references to the game and also characters that would not have been introduced if it weren't for Super Mario Bros. 2. The game actually became so popular that it was released in Japan as Super Mario USA.

Now let's talk about some game play. One of the things I love about this game is that you have the choice to play as whatever character you choose, Mario, Luigi, Toad or Princess Toadstool.


Each character (aside from Mario) holds a different yet useful talent, Luigi kicks his legs and jumps the highest, Toad is strong and can throw objects quicker than anyone else, and Peach can jump over giant gaps. Once you master the game it will be easy to figure out which character to choose with each level. The object of the game is to make your way through the 7 worlds of Dream Land and defeat the enemy, Wart. It's a weird game, there are enemies wearing what looks like gas masks, egg shooting Birdos, rockets and flying carpets.

Unlike what we are used to, you can not jump on enemies and expect them to die. Instead when you jump on an enemy you have the ability to ride them. You can use this to your advantage to gain access to higher areas by riding an enemy that jumps high in the air. In order to kill enemies you must pick up vegetables and throw them at your target. You can also pick up enemies and throw them.

Each level is filled with hidden magic potion bottles, that are disguised as vegetables in the ground and will come in handy because every time you toss a potion bottle, a secret door appears and will give you access to a one up mushroom, and like everything else, you must pick it up to use it.

Each level and world are different in their own weird way. An example of that being in World two when you go to defeat Birdo, the entire area is covered in what looks like Legos. As awesome as Legos are, it's incredibly random and has nothing to do with the game whatsoever. At the end of most levels you will need to defeat Birdo, he shoots out egg looking objects that you need to jump and land on so you can pick them up and throw them towards him. All you have to do is hit him three times (the magic number) and you can prepare to walk through the giant eagle mouth and go to the next level. Yes you read it right, the giant eagle mouth.
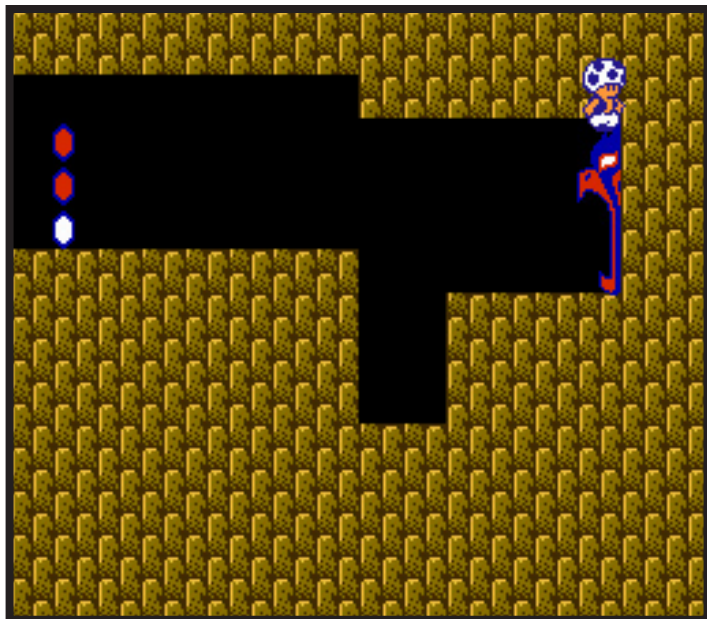
After each level you are given a chance to win lives with a slot machine game called Bonus Chance. You'll be thanking the Nintendo Gods that you have this, especially if you have just one life left and are about to beat Wart.

BONUS CHANCE

PUSH (A) BUTTON
EXTRA LIFE · · · 3

Once you make it to the very end and kill the giant green enemy known as 'Wart" you realize that the countless hours you put into figuring out the odd events that have been occurring over the last 7 worlds were all just a dream. The game ends with Mario in his jammies sleeping the night away, and you questioning your entire existence.

Nonetheless, Super Mario Bros 2 is a classic, and a game that everyone needs to try at least once. You can't be a true Super Mario connoisseur without beating the famous Super Mario Bros 2. Enjoy!

スーパーマリオブラザース 2

The real Super Mario Brothers 2 was not available for western audiences until a modified version was released in the SNES cartridge 'Super Mario All-Stars". The full un-altered experience was not released until the Wii through Nintendo's Virtual Console service.

Why wasn't the game ever released offcially in America? Is gameplay really that difficult? The answer lies in the fact that this game actually really indeed lives up to the hype as an extemely difficult title.

The game plays very much like the many now released hacked and edited ROMs of Super Mario Brothers. Graphics are essentially the same as the first SMB title, only instead of a 1 player and 2 player mode; you have 2 options, to play as Mario or to play as Luigi. This is where the game becomes painfully frustrating, but at the same time really intriguing. Everyone knows that Luigi and Mario have always played a little different than one another. In SMB 2 the differences are very great.

Luigi can jump much higher than his shorter, more famous brother, but it is as if the entire level has been covered in an oil slick. It is very easy for Luigi to slide right off a platform and into the abyss. Mario has much more traction, it is almost as if his shoes got covered in super glue. However his short little jumps make bounding over obstacles almost impossible.

The level design in this game is enough to drive anyone crazy. Impossibly short platforms and large gaps are the order of the day. As you battle your way through over 50 additional levels of SMB goodness it is clear that only the best of the best succeed in defeating this game.

Classic Advertisement- 1986

Sega Mega Drive / Genesis: Collected Works - The Definitive History of Sega's 16 Bit Console
By John Meadows

In November 2013, Darren Wall began a Kickstarter to fund the ultimate documentary art book to celebrate 25 years of the Sega Mega Drive/Genesis. In less than 48 hours, he had reached his goal of £30,000 ($47,000). By the time the Kickstarter ended on December 9th, over 2,000 backers had pledged £98,000 ($154,000) to the project. Published by Read Only Memory, this collected works is not only the definitive history of the Mega Drive/Genesis, but the best book about video games I have ever seen.
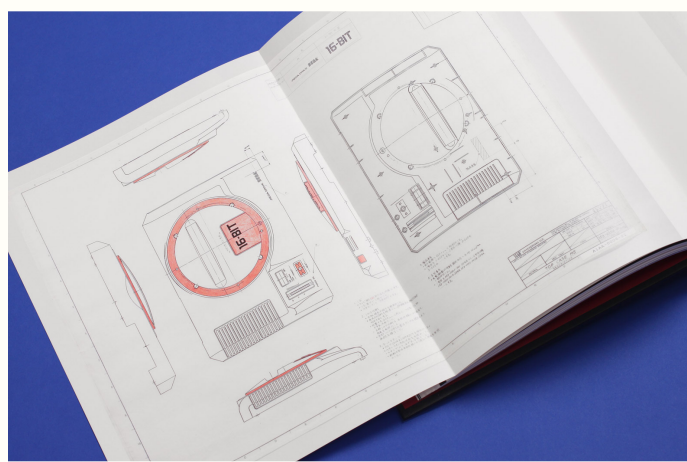
The book was produced in collaboration with Sega and is the only licensed history of the console. The first thing that got me when I opened the package was the hardcover, foil blocked black on black cover. When you open the book and start turning the pages you can feel the paper is high stock. Of course, there is a written history of the console, but the real gem of the book is the pictures. Full page photos of the different versions of the console, the CD add-on, the power base converter and more. There are two gatefold pages of the blueprints of the Mega Drive and Genesis, along with concept drawings of controllers and the hardware itself, most of which has never been seen outside of Sega of Japan.

The artwork in the book is amazing. Cover art from games like Phantasy Star, Landstalker, Golden Axe and dozens, all from not only the EU and US, but the Japanese versions as well. There is even pixel art from the original games. Ever wanted to see all of a town from Phantasy Star 2 all at one time? This has a two page spread of that, along with character models from Sonic, Streets of Rage, Shinobi and more. Over 60 pages dedicated to the art, as well as title logos and levels. There is also concept art from some of the most popular games. Early character sketches of Toe jam and Earl, Sonic and more. There are two gatefold pages in the art section also, of Shinobi and Space Harrier that I would love to have in poster form to hang on my game room wall.

Also in the book, are rare game design documents showing concepts of characters and level design that shows how the process of making a game looks. There is an entire section dedicated to game character illustration where you can see what some of your favorite characters were first designed to look like. To top it all off, there are 27 different interviews with original developers of the console from Yu Suzuki (Space Harrier, Hang-On) to composer Keisuke Tsukahara (Shinobi, Shenmue 2). With these interviews, you get an even deeper look at not only the development of the console, but how game development was in the early 90's. It was very interesting to see who worked on what game, and to even find that

some of these developers have worked on some of my favorite games within the past few years.

Overall, I highly recommend this book to not only the Mega Drive/Genesis lover, but anyone who loves the 16 bit era of video games or the art that goes into games. With over 1,000 illustrations and 352 pages this book is very informative. The pages are printed on heavy stock paper using a high quality print process, and the hardback cover looks very nice. When they ship the book, it even has plastic corner protectors to keep the book pristine in shipping. So much in the design of the book is high end, that the £35.00 ($55.00) seems like it was seriously underpriced. The book is amazing; I have looked through it for days and have seen something new each time that I didn't see before. I also like how they included footnotes about everything in the book either on each page, in notes at the end of sections, or at the end of the book. The Genesis was the console that made me fall in love with video games and to look through this book takes me back to those days. I may seem biased when I say this, but this book is not only the book for the history of the Mega Drive/Genesis, but it is the best video game book I have ever seen.

If you are intrested in getting your own copy, please go to readonlymemory.vg and get yours today.

Thanks to Read-Only Memory for supplying a copy for review.

RETRO INSPIRED MOBILE GAMING-
DIVIN' KONG BY MAD SLUG GAME STUDIOS

Here at Classic Console Magazine we are always on the lookout for the newest retro inspired gaming goodness and we especially enjoy reviewing games that are available on mobile platforms.

This month's retro inspired mobile game is brought to us by our friends over at Mad Slug Game Studios. Mad Slug, a studio based out of Birmingham, England, makes it's games all around it's main mascot, a familiar looking ape with the last name of 'Kong".

Have you ever wondered how Donkey Kong or King Kong would fare at a summer pool party? I bet you thought Mr. Kong would be the life of the party? This game sets out to answer that question!

The controls are simple and the game is easy to pick up after playing for a few minutes. By tucking and extending the ape's body and performing rotations you set out to get the highest score by performing perfectly timed and executed trick dives. Each level takes place on a diving board and as you progress you go to diving boards higher and higher from the water surface. Each level you get 3 attempts at performing the dive successfully and reaching a target score or else you are sent back down to the lower levels.

Everyone here on staff who had the opportunity to try Divin' Kong loved it. Our only gripe was that there wasn't a real tutorial at the beginning, which made the game a little frustrating intially. Get beyond that however, and you get a highly addictive quick game that you will play frequently!

Known in Japan as Bare Knuckle: Furious Iron Fist, Streets of Rage was SEGA's 2nd major success with a side-scrolling action, beat-em-up style game, the first being Golden Axe. Much like Golden Axe, which was released 2 years earlier, Streets of Rage had for it's time fantastic graphics, excellent controls and engaging backdrops for each level. That is where the comparisons end however, as Streets of Rage truly is a unique game in it's own right.

Like most beat-em-ups, enemy characters can come from the right, left, above and below you. At times there are so many enemies on the screen at once it gets very hectic, but that is where the fun lies.

The plot of the game is as follows: A evil gang has taken over your entire city. The once peaceful dwelling is now filled full of criminals and corrupt police officers. Three honest cops decide to quit the force and take matters in their own hands to fight crime and take back their beloved city.

These three heroes are the playable characters in Streets of Rage. Adam is an accomplished boxer, Axel is skilled in martial arts and Blaze is an expert in judo. Due to their unique specialties, each character has different characteristics and that has a big impact in who you choose and how you play the game.

Battling through each of 8 different locations, at the end of each level (with the only exception being the 7th level) you fight a gigantic boss who is much bigger than you are. At your aide like many other games in the genre you have the ability to pick up weapons and bottles and use them against your foes.

Streets of Rage is unique in it's use of alternate endings. At the end of the game your player is presented with an offer by the head villian Mr.X to go to the dark side and join the crime family. Many factors such as whether you are playing single player or co-op and what the player chooses as his response to Mr. X will actually change the ending of the game.

The other thing Streets of Rage has going for it (besides it's classic gameplay) is the soundtrack. Recognized as one of the best soundtracks in all of gaming, Yuzo Koshiro, the acclaimed composer was responsible for the music. Koshiro has also made the soundtracks to such games as ActRaiser and the Revenge of Shinobi.

Streets of Rage certainly has to be considered one of the best in the genre and this first title went on to spawn 2 more sequels after it, although arguably neither one came close to the magic that was the first Streets of Rage.
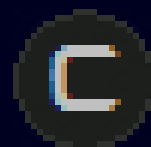
STREETS OF RAGE

CONTROLS-

Move in any direction
Press twice to run

A — Special Move

B — Attack

C — Jump

NAME:ADAM HUNTER
SEX:MALE   AGE:23

HISTORY:EX-COP
      HOBBY:BONSAI
ABILITY:BOXING

Adam is the strongest character in the game. Ideal for beginners, he packs a punch although it is at expense of speed. His moves are jabs, uppercuts and kicks.

NAME:AXEL STONE
SEX:MALE   AGE:22

HISTORY:EX-COP
      HOBBY:VIDEO GAMES
ABILITY:MARTIAL ARTS

Axel is the other favorite of newbies to Streets of Rage. He is the most balanced character with equal speed and power but poor jumping. His moves consist of grapples, punches and kicks.

NAME:BLAZE FIELDING
SEX:FEMALE   AGE:21

HISTORY:EX-COP
      HOBBY:LAMBADA
ABILITY:JUDO

Blaze should only be used by expert players. As the weakest character, she is also the the most agile and quickest. She can perform quick attacks and grapples.
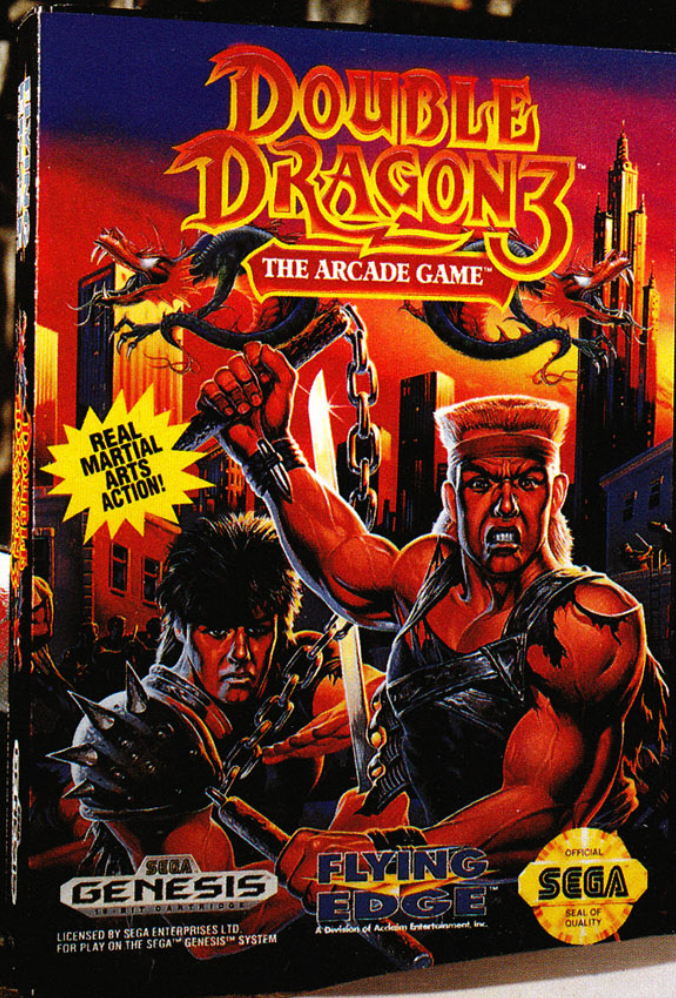
Alternate Versions of Streets of Rage-

Sega Master System

Released same year as the original, suffers from worse graphics but includes a stage 6 boss not found anywhere else.

Sega Game Gear

This version has a lesser color palette and poorer gameplay than the original. Due to cartridge limitations, this version omits Adam as a character choice.

By Far the Worst Double Dragon Aracde Title of Them All, The Rosetta Stone Lacks In Many Areas.

Double Dragon is one of the greatest beat-em-up franchises of all time and Double Dragon 1 and 2 are fantastic games, with the first being a true masterpiece and a real gaming classic.

The one downfall to all of the games in the series is a lack of a true storyline. The one nice thing that can be said about Double Dragon 3 is that it has a detailed story (and a pretty engaging one at that). Unfortunately, that is the only bright spot in what is otherwise a pretty lackluster effort.

Developed by East Technology and released in 1990 by Technos, Double Dragon 3: The Rosetta Stone boasts up to 3 player simultaneous action. In addition to the characters Jimmy Lee and Billy from the other Double Dragon games, DD 3: The Rosetta Stone adds a third character named Sonny (essentially a yellow-clad player sprite identical to the 2 Lee brothers in appearance).

Jimmy and Billy meet a fortune teller named Hiruko after the events of Double Dragon 2. She tells them that is their destiny to fight the world's strongest fighter and that before they do so they must collect all 3 Rosetta Stones and go to Egypt. Of course, the brothers agree and head off on the beginning of their adventure.

This is where the issues begin in the game unfortunately. Sonny seems like an after thought thrown in to make the title a 3 player game. The graphics are not nearly as good as DD 1 or 2, as well as the animations seeming very choppy. Screenshots actually make the game look better than it really does in real life.

The enemies are very boring and repetitive. At many times it seems like you are playing against digital punching bags. The game lacks the challenge and variety that many other similar games from this era provided.

In conclusion, this game is something cool to fire up on MAME but if you see it for real in a retro arcade somewhere, your quarter is probably better spent elsewhere, which is really unfortunate because with a strong storyline it really had the potential to be a great sequel and the best of the bunch. Unfortunately, it just felt short and feels very much like a lazy effort to cash in on the beat-em-up craze of the early to mid 90's.

CAPCOM®

Originally Intended as a Sequel to Street Fighter, Final Fight Was Transformed Into One of the Greatest Beat-Em-Ups of All Time
By Josh LaFrance

In the late 80's a game which would soon be known as Final Fight was being developed as a sequel to the original Street Fighter. Once a little game called Double Dragon was released and exploded into a huge arcade success, Capcom decided to switch genres and develop Final Fight as a side scrolling beat-em-up. Thankfully the change took place for us gamers as Final Fight is one of the better examples of the beat-em-up genre and a true arcade classic.

Final Fight can be played by up to two players simultaneously. Choices of characters are Haggar, the ex-professional wrestler turned mayor of Metro city, Cody the brawler whose girlfriend Jessica was kidnapped by the evil Mad Gear Gang which has taken over Metro city (Jessica also happens to be Haggar's daughter) and lastly Cody's friend Guy.

Controls are pretty standard for a beat-em-up of this era. What really sets this game apart from the others is the creative weapons and items that can be picked up and used as well as the various health recovery items the player can eat or drink to regain strength. One of these items is what looks to be a roasted turkey (or maybe is it a chicken?) which for some reason as a kid this author thought was pretty funny.

This game is just beautiful. The graphics and background are drawn with great care and the animations are pretty smooth.

Final Fight was originally shown at various trade shows under the title of Street Fighter '89. Many people complained that the gameplay was nothing like Street Fighter so Capcom renamed the game to Final Fight. According to members of the development team many ideas for the game as well as it's central plot was lifted from the 1984 action movie 'Streets of Fire" in which a young girl is kidnapped by a violent gang only to be rescued by the hero Tom Cody. You can certainly see the resemblance there can't you?